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THE LOVE-LETTERS OF
WILLIAM PITT



The Right Hon. Wm. Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham, Secretary of State, 1766-1769.

WILLIAM PITT, FIRST LORD CHATHAM

THE LOVE-LETTERS OF
WILLIAM PITT
FIRST LORD CHATHAM

EDITED BY
ETHEL ASHTON EDWARDS

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To
CYRIL TOMKINSON
priest and friend
in
gratitude and affection

P R E F A C E

H I D D E N away among the private correspondence of the Chatham MSS. in the Record Office, London, these letters have lain for years.

Dr. Harold Temperley drew my attention to them a few months ago. He had thought of making a book of them himself, but had not time. So he suggested the idea to me. I wish to thank him here for that suggestion, as also for much kindly help in supplying me with other material which he thought might be of use.

For me, the Letters, written in an age of sentiment and artificiality, yet have the romance of all true love. They throw a wistful light upon the mind and heart of the finest Statesman England ever had, and upon the woman whom he chose to be his wife.

ETHEL ASHTON EDWARDS

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MESSRS. CHAPMAN & HALL, LTD., much regret that, owing to an oversight, no mention was made by MRS. EDWARDS in her introduction of her indebtedness to PROFESSOR BASIL WILLIAMS'S "Life of Pitt", published by MESSRS LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

THE WRITERS OF THE LETTERS

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THE LETTERS

WILLIAM PITT was forty-six when these Love-Letters were written. He had had one love affair, years before, but after that his heart seems to have remained untouched. He knew many women, and most women liked him. He was devoted to his sister Ann, but of later years their relations had become estranged. When in his first youth, he had had a passing infatuation for an unknown lady at Besançon, "une de ces flammes passagères, un éclair qui a passé si vite qu'il n'en reste pas le moindre vestige."

Horace Walpole insinuates that Pitt had supplanted the Prince of Wales in the affections of Lady Archibald Hamilton; but we have only Walpole's own suggestion of this. Pitt was certainly a great favourite with the beautiful Duchess of Queensberry. Mrs. Montagu of *Bas Bleu* fame, when she was young, thought him incomparable; her sister, Sarah Robinson, just twenty, when he was thirty-six, had no inclination to dance with anyone but Mr. Pitt, "and that I have not acquaintance enough with him to expect," she says with a sigh; "I can only cherish my hope of further good fortune." Mary West ("pretty little M.," with, alas! no money), thrown often into the society of her brother's friend, seems to have lost her heart to him. He had, in fact, not lacked opportunities

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to marry, for his brave spirit, his noble bearing, and a certain mystery about him made him exceedingly attractive to women." . . . He was charming to them all, yet always he had held himself apart,—remote and safe. Until, at the age of forty-six, he suddenly fell passionately in love with Lady Hester Grenville, the only sister of five brothers, all of whom had been his friends for twenty years and more.

William was the second son of Robert Pitt and his wife, Lady Harriet Villiers. He was born in Golden Square, Westminster, on November 15th, 1708.

His forbears had been county gentlemen for several generations, well born and well connected, but of no great wealth, until old Thomas Pitt ("Governor Pitt"), William's grandfather, laid the foundations of the family fortune by his somewhat dubious acquisition of the Pitt Diamond. "Governor" Pitt was a man of extreme vitality, and indomitable will; in his way a genius. He set out to India in quest of adventure at the age of twenty-one, traded successfully and became an "interloper," that is to say, he ran an opposition association and flouted the great East India Company triumphantly, time after time, by the aid of his quicker wits, faster ships, and a quite unscrupulous use of money and men. He had no fears and no mercy, and the life suited him well. Later, by a somewhat cynical turn of Fate, he became a great Whig Member of the House of Commons, and was chosen the East India Company's President, and given extraordinary powers of discipline over his own Council and the other servants of

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the Company. As the Council remarked, not without humour, to their representative in Bengal: "We think the President's advice may be helpful to you, he having engaged to us to signalize himself herein."

Yet, in spite of his obvious fitness for the post, his appointment was not received without opposition!

At this time Thomas Pitt was still only forty years old, and of unquenchable spirits, health and vitality. He must have enjoyed the situation as it deserved.

He went out to Madras and lived in great state, dining, as President, with all his company, off his own silver plate (which he had sold to the Company for £765), and—the picture is too good to lose,—setting forth at their head to hear Divine Service on Sunday mornings!

He exercised the strictest moral discipline over his subordinates. He remained in India for many years, the terror alike of Native misrule and British intrigue: fighting, and in the end, subduing, and incorporating with his own, a new Company, sent out with a Charter by King William III in 1698.

The tone of his intercourse with tiresome local Nabobs is shown in a letter to a presuming potentate. "We all know your King to be great and wise and just . . . but most of his little governors, amongst whom I reckon you, to be very corrupt and unjust," etc. Governor Pitt was not of those who suffer fools gladly. But he had his gentler moments. "My leisure time," he writes in 1703, "I generally spend in gardening" (a taste he passed on to his famous grand-

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son). He had high ideals, too, whatever may have been his practice at times, and he even "promoted an Anglican mission for half-castes and natives; but when the Roman Catholic Bishop and his priests attempted to set up their authority against his, he 'took occasion to make those Churchmen know that they are under an English government.'"

The Native tax-gatherers were very insolent, "but," he writes, with satisfaction, "those within our reach I keep in pretty good order, by now and then giving 'em a pretty good banging!" This chastisement he more than once carried out himself. Meanwhile, he parted with his wife, owing to some scandal connected with a "scoundrell rascally villain," so he had his own real troubles at home.

During the latter part of his Presidency at Madras, he turned his attention to diamond buying, and somehow or other acquired possession of the famous Pitt diamond, which was finally sold for £133,000. How it came into his possession has always remained a mystery. He sent his son Robert home with it to England in 1702, but the task of selling it was no easy one, for Governor Pitt refused to part with it "under £1,500 a carat, which," he said, "I am sure is as cheap as Neck-beef, and let any Potentate buy it, the next day 'tis worth a million of pounds sterling."

He bought great estates in England, on his return in 1710; Boconnoc, then the finest place in Cornwall, and Swallowfield Place near Reading; and when in London he rented a fine house in Pall Mall.

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His sons, probably worn out by their father's savage vitality, were men of no particular ability, and a disappointment to him. Yet all his children married into great families. Robert, the eldest, was a convinced Tory, and drove the hard old Whig nearly insane with rage by his championship of the Jacobite Prince of Wales, in the '15 Rebellion. This Robert Pitt, William's father, was a handsome man with social gifts and persistent personality. His wife, Lady Harriet Villiers, was a good and beautiful woman, and their marriage seems to have been a particularly happy one. Even the Governor loved her! But the old man was a somewhat tragic figure in his later years. His temper grew more and more wild and violent. "He became extraordinary humoursome and testy with his children and grandchildren, whom he alternately petted, and chased out of the house . . . they could not, for example, go to the 'masquerade' without leave, for the keys were carried to the old gentleman's bedside at ten o'clock every night, and they were constantly liable to outrageous abuse and insults from his ungovernable temper."

He also lost much of his wealth, in the South Sea Bubble, and after his death he left less than had been expected.

But it says something for Governor Pitt's insight into character that he was devoted to William Pitt, Robert's second son. The old man might be—he was—a tyrant, and his hand was against every man's. But he had that profound and penetrating judgment which can neither be acquired nor denied. And not long

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before he died he wrote of William: "He is a hopefull lad, and I doubt not he will answer yours and all his friends' expectations."

William Pitt's early childhood must have been a strange mixture of storm and sunshine; his parents then lived at Mawarden Court, near Salisbury (given to them by the Governor in the year he was born), and he grew up in space and luxury, in a family of brothers and sisters "for happy play in grassy places."

But the children were on a visit to their grandfather in London when, in 1715, Robert had his terrible quarrel with the Governor over the Jacobite Rebellion, and from time to time they must have caught echoes of other savage disputes between the old man and their various Uncles and Aunts.

William was sent to Eton when his school-time came, but not one of his three sons went there. In later years he told Lord Shelbourne "that he scarcely observed a boy who was not cowed for life at Eton; that a Public School life might suit a boy of turbulent disposition but would not do where there was any gentleness."

Curiously enough, since he was bred in an atmosphere of the Classics, Pitt, in after years, advised his nephew against the study of the Greek language, and his own quotations were nearly always from Latin sources. Three of his schoolfellows remained his close friends for life: George Lyttelton, and Richard and George Grenville, whose sister he afterwards married; another friend was Henry Fielding, the novelist. Pitt left Eton at the end of the School year, 1726, but did not go to Oxford until January,

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when he entered Trinity College as a Gentleman Commoner. Probably, it has been thought, after his hard time at Eton, the boy required an unusually long rest. For he was never very strong. (It is usual, of course, to enter the University at the beginning of the University year (October).) None of his Eton friends was at Oxford with him, and he must have felt lonely at first. Richard Grenville had gone abroad; his brother George was in London, at the Inner Temple. Fielding had gone to Leyden. He made no friendship of importance during his academic year,—for at the end of his first year his health compelled him to leave Oxford for good, without taking a degree.

He had many losses in his family about this time; both his grandmothers died, also his grandfather (the Governor) and his Father; all of whom, though often at war with one another, had always been his friends. And Pitt was of an age and temperament to be deeply moved by such losses.

While at Oxford he studied Classics, Philosophy, and History. Von Ruville cynically implies that Pitt's public morality was intentionally assumed and cultivated, since he "recognized that the use of immoral means was contrary to his character and would not only cause him unhappiness but wreck his powers."

"The great Poets of Antiquity," says Von Ruville, "Homer and Virgil, for whom, as Poets, he showed a strong preference, provided him with notable examples of achievements performed by purely moral means. He readily

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appreciated their teaching of honour, courage, unselfishness, the love of Truth, distinction of behaviour and humanity, and intended to follow their instruction in his political career." Von Ruville also contends that his reading of philosophy was prompted by the same sort of worldly, personal motives.

I take leave to doubt this. It seems foreign to the nature of so young and ardent an idealist. The one philosopher who made most mark on him was Locke, to whose treatise *On the Human Understanding* he confesses himself deeply indebted.

Pitt also studied History very thoroughly and systematically. He began by making a chronological list of names and dates, and then worked through all the more important histories on each period. Of the old Histories he especially liked Plutarch, Livy and Sallust. The History of Ancient Rome seemed to him "The Apostolic Age of Patriotism." He was wholehearted in his worship of the Romans.

He used for English History, Burnet's "History of the English Reformation," May's "History of the Long Parliament," and Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion," which he liked less because of its Royalist tendencies. For William Pitt, even thus early, in politics, harked back to his grandfather. He speaks of all these books in his later letters, and they seem to have made a great impression upon him.

Finally, he trained himself in Oratory by a close study of the Logic of Aristotle and the "mighty warnings" of Demosthenes and

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Cicero. He is said to have known Barrow's Sermons by heart, and to have studied a large dictionary from beginning to end in order to get a wide vocabulary.

From his letters to his nephew in after years it would seem that Pitt attributed his ill-health as due in part to certain excesses in his living at Oxford. But nothing can be proved. His gout was inherited.

He next went abroad, but there is no record of the Tour. He certainly spent a short time in study at Utrecht, in 1728, aided in his expenses by his brother Thomas; but apart from this there is nothing to be gathered either of the purpose or the manner of his stay in the Netherlands.

He returned to England in 1731, and his health seems, for the time, to have been better. But his worldly prospects were none too high. He was a second son. He had taken no degree. He had very little money. And he had, as yet, settled upon no career. But he had a great friend in his old schoolfellow, George Lyttelton, whose sister had married his elder brother, Thomas Pitt, of Boconnoc; and George Lyttelton seems to have been able to enlist the help of his uncle, Lord Cobham, on his friend's behalf.

Lord Cobham was exactly the kind of patron Pitt wanted. He rather fancied himself as a Mæcenas; and he held all the cards!

Curiously, in the light of after events, he chose for William Pitt the seemingly inappropriate part of a Cornet in the Life Guards Blue. At that time Pitt's appearance was the most

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impressive thing about him. He had distinction; but his intellectual abilities ripened later. It is quite evident that his appearance was the thing which struck Lord Cobham most favourably. He was a well-dressed, graceful, self-possessed, eminently presentable young man. And, being very adaptable, he soon attuned himself to his new rôle, and threw himself into the study of his profession.

Secretly, he was always ambitious. Once in the Army, and he dreamed of supreme command.* Meanwhile he wrote a somewhat amazing Essay, which appeared in the *London Journal* in 1733. A "Letter on Superstition, addressed to the people of England." A curious subject, and a curious Essay altogether; it is difficult to understand how William Pitt, the young Lifeguardsman, came to such a theme, or, more amazingly, to the treatment he gives it. There is something dramatic about it. Pitt always saw himself as interesting, and would be not unwilling to give the great world, even then, a chance of discussing him. "The object of the Essay was nothing less than a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole fabric of religious doctrine and worship."† There was something peculiarly revolting to a nature like Pitt's in the Protestant formalism which prevailed in his day, in England; and knowing nothing else, he was ready to preach the doctrine of "humanitarianism as the only divine teaching." He

* "He afterwards told Lord Shelbourne that there was no book on Military Topics which he had not read through."—Von Ruville, Vol. I, p. 98

† Von Ruville, Vol. I, p. 99

recalled the Essay in after years with more than a little regret.

In 1733 his military duties allowed him a short stay in France and Italy. He probably went to improve his French, for most of his letters to his sister written at this time, are written in that language.

He stayed first in Paris, and went from there to Besançon. It was here that he first fell in love—with a French lady, of whom he writes to Ann: “*Quoique son cœur fût certainement neuf, son esprit ne l’était point . . . sa taille était grand, et des plus parfaites, son air simple avec quelque chose de noble . . . suffit que vous sachiez que ce fût de ces beautés d’un grand effet, et que sa physionomie prononcât quelque chose des qualités d’une âme admirable*”; but “*elle n’a point de titre ni de grand nom qui impose; et c’est là le diable.*” Mr. Pitt’s heart, in fact, though touched, was still under control. Prudence, mere prudence, demanded a sacrifice. And, even as he says farewell: “*Je n’en ai pas tout à travers le cœur, mais toutefois j’en ai.*” There was, after all, a career waiting for him in England. This was not at all his idea of the fitness of things. So Mr. Pitt’s heart remained unbroken. Three months afterwards he could write quite lightly: “*C’était de ces flammes passagères, un éclair qui a passé si vite qu’il n’en reste pas le moindre vestige.*” “*Elle n’a point de titre, ni de grand nom qui impose. . . .*” Poor lady!

From Besançon he went to Marseilles, Montpellier, and Lyons to Geneva, thence along the Rhine, spending the winter at Geneva. Years

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afterwards (1755), speaking in the House, he compared the coalition between Henry Fox and the Duke of Newcastle with the confluence of the Rhone and the Saone at Lyons, which, he says, he himself had seen. He returned home at the end of the year.

But, just after Pitt's return from abroad, Lord Cobham quarrelled with Walpole, then Prime Minister, and was deprived of all his Military Commands, and so ceased to command the Cavalry Regiment to which Pitt belonged. And Pitt, with his quick eye to the main chance, soon saw that all hope of promotion from that quarter was at an end. "I find out when the day of things is done." So he turned his attention to Parliament.

In 1735, Thomas Pitt was returned for two seats, Old Sarum and Okehampton, and choosing the latter for himself, his brother William was returned for Old Sarum, at his express desire.

The whole Temple family, with Lord Cobham at their head, formed one party, which Pitt joined. They were reinforced by some of the most brilliant young men of the day, and the Prince of Wales, also about the same age, allied himself with them. Walpole sneered at the party as the "Boy Patriots," but his contempt was ill-timed and unjustified.

George Lyttelton, as an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales, and of Pitt himself, must have been a great help at this time. He admired Pitt, and being without jealousy, forwarded his friend's cause whenever and wherever he could. Thomas Pitt, too, was intimately connected with the Prince, while Ann (Pitt's sister), was

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Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline, and later, entered the service of the Princess of Wales herself. Moreover, at the Liberty Club and elsewhere, William Pitt must have met the Prince of Wales frequently, and have been quite well known to him.

At this time there was considerable tension between the Prince and his father, King George II. The Prince was anxious to marry. He wanted the greater freedom and dignity of a Household of his own; he also wanted children who should be heirs to the Throne and so disappoint his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, of his prospects of the succession. And he thought his father was opposed to him in this desire. So he resolved on a bold move. He forced an interview with the King, through the reluctant Walpole, in which he asked for three things: first, that he might have an increased allowance, regularly paid; secondly, that a suitable wife might be found for him; and thirdly, that he might have permission to join in a continental war. His father, of three evils, chose the least, and resolved to allow him the wife—and even found one for him in the Princess Augusta of Saxe Gotha.

The Prince was delighted. Not only was he to marry, but he approved his bride. She was beautiful and charming. But the tension between the King and his son still remained. It had been of too long standing to be easily relaxed. And this, of course, meant that the Prince and his intimates, "the Boy Patriots," were in opposition to the Government and so to Walpole and the King.

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The Prince's triumph was their triumph too. Upon the Opposition therefore fell the grateful task of moving an "Address of Congratulation to be humbly presented to His Majesty upon the occasion of the Marriage of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales," etc., etc. If the stars in their courses had been fighting for Pitt they could hardly have presented him with a more favourable opportunity for a maiden speech.

For, consider! To the uninitiated, the speech, which is probably quite ill-reported (there were no newspaper reporters in those days), reads like the usual bombastic and fulsome utterance peculiar to such addresses.

But, to those who knew, it must have been touched with the most delightful and refreshing irony. When Pitt talked of the Prince's "filial duty," of "this long-desired occasion"; of the King's "joy," his "tender paternal delight in indulging the most dutiful application, the most humble request, of a submissive and obedient son," the Boy Patriots must have found it difficult to repress a smile, as they thought of the acute disagreements between the Prince and his father, and the marriage snatched so grudgingly from the paternal opposition. One can see them sitting there, rigid and correct, with their serious faces, not daring to look at one another; George Lyttelton, in particular, statesque, even almost saintly, with his folded arms and his air of intent resignation. . . . And, oh! his nice comments afterwards! For the speech probably owed not a little of its bitter satire to the promptings of

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George Lyttelton—who was a far greater satirist than Pitt. The speech, especially as a maiden speech, was, in fact, a triumph for the Party, and in particular for Pitt himself. The nation, unknowing, delighted in its loyal adulation of the King and the King's son, and those who knew experienced an even richer delight as stroke upon stroke of the most delicate irony fell upon their ears.

The whole House applauded; the Prince became, naturally enough, Pitt's warm ally. "There was," says Von Ruville, "A feeling of malicious joy, concealed beneath an appearance of loyalty."

Walpole's revenge consisted in "muzzling this terrible Cornet of Horse." In other words, he dismissed Pitt from his post in the Life Guards. This, at first sight, was somewhat of a blow. Pitt had nothing else to look to; and the dismissal of officers for political offences was rare. "But, like everything else at this point in Pitt's career," it turned out to be an actual gain. The Army rose and denounced the unfairness of such political interference. Soon everyone was talking of the young Cornet of Horse "who had lost his commission as a martyr to his political convictions."

The chance thus offered was eagerly seized by Pitt himself. With his unfailing "flair" for the dramatic, he drove about the country in a one-horse chaise, receiving the acclamations of the crowds who flocked to greet him. Cobham delighted in him, and delighted in showing him off. Pitt had just those social gifts which most succeed in such a crisis. He was distin-

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guished; quick, witty, graceful, epigrammatic, and irresistible in conversation. Everyone courted him. George Lyttelton wrote him a poem. Already Pitt was on the high road to fame.

The chief parliamentary events of the next year were connected with the discussion of the Prince of Wales's allowance, which discussion led to a more and more open breach with his father; till, at last, there were practically two Courts in London—the one in opposition to the other—and the members of the one hardly daring to visit the members of the other.

In the Prince's Household, Lyttelton became Official Adviser; and the Groom of the Bedchamber was William Pitt!

From now onwards began a long struggle between the rising Orator and Walpole, which, given Pitt's youth and genius and personal gifts, could only have one ending.

Meanwhile, we cannot have any clear picture of his life and growth in power if we fail to remember that always, from the age of seventeen onwards, he fought an insidious enemy. Gout held him often, as in a vice, even during his early twenties. It was a severe handicap to an ambitious young man, but there are critics who say that he turned even that to account on occasion, and made it serve his purpose. There is a story that the beautiful Duchess of Queensberry, of whom he was the devoted admirer, once persuaded Pitt to plead an attack of gout as an excuse for absenting himself from the House, and so neglecting to support a parliamentary measure to which she was opposed!

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There were certainly other occasions when, swathed in bandages, and leaning on crutches, he made the pathetic—the almost theatrical—appeal of one whose physical frailty warred cruelly with his burning power of mind. And if now and then he forgot the gout in his right arm while he made a gesture of peculiar force and effectiveness—who could be found to smile?

Pitt's personality was always his greatest asset. You felt his presence in a room even before he spoke. That is a certain sign of genius. If he were well and strong, at such times as he could stand up in all the grace and dignity which were his birthright, then physical health and strength, then height and dignity, seemed to his hearers the most desired of gifts. But when, almost beaten by a long struggle with pain, his voice weaker than its wont, his great eyes flashing in his wearied face, he stood to meet a thronged House, hanging on his every word, then that very physical frailty of his touched their hearts to tears of sympathy. Whatever he did, however he might appear, he was himself.

With the Prince of Wales he soon became a privileged companion. They stayed about together at the same country houses—among others at Lord Cobham's seat at Stowe. It was at Stowe that Lord Cobham remarked to a guest, seeing Pitt in earnest conversation with the Prince, that he feared lest the Prince should be led into some indiscreet course of action. The guest replied that, anyhow, they could not be alone long. To which Lord Cobham eagerly

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retorted: "Sir, you do not know Mr. Pitt's talent for insinuation; in a very short quarter of an hour he can persuade anyone of anything."*

Pitt also accompanied the Prince to Bath; for, even thus early, he was drinking the waters regularly for his own health.

In fact, during these years of his life, he learnt to be very thoroughly a courtier. Politically, his energies were devoted to the overthrow of Walpole. In this struggle, he had only his oratory to help him; neither means nor political influence. For Walpole was supported by the Crown, and Pitt was the close friend of the rebellious Prince of Wales.

But Pitt's oratory soon became a force to reckon with. He knew himself that in the House no one could rival him in powers of persuasion, in physical advantages. He must have had, even at this time, a very stately presence, though some have added that he was still too thin. To this fine presence he brought his fastidious attention to dress, so that his personal appearance should be the very right expression of himself. That was his secret. His look,—the arresting glance of those wonderful eyes,—his every gesture and movement,—expressed exactly what he meant it to express. He had complete command over himself. He was himself; and so many of his hearers were so far less than their so far lesser selves. "His fine voice," says one of his biographers, "was a still further advantage... His words resounded clear and penetrating. If he exerted himself to the full,

* Von Ruville, Vol. I, p. 138.

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he so filled the House that no one could escape his influence; at the same time, the tone of calm and gentle explanation enchained attention, which was often so intense, while his clearness of articulation was so great, that even his gentlest whisper could be felt."

And upon all these natural gifts Pitt had lavished unceasing thought and care. He knew his weapons and he spared no pains to use them to the best advantage. Thus equipped, there is nothing in the world a man need fear.

So Mr. Pitt slew Goliath by the five smooth stones of his five wits. It was a wonderful achievement. But it was only one of many proofs in History that it is Personality alone that counts. Whatever other advantages a man has, if he has not that, he is a failure; whatever advantages a man has not, if he has personality, he rules.

Lecky, who has preserved for us some of Pitt's speeches, proves that the matter was, on occasion, hardly inferior to the manner. But, speaking generally, Pitt's speeches had to be heard, not read, to produce their full effect; moreover, those he prepared with care, were less effective than those delivered on the spur of the moment; which is only to say that what he said was less important than the way in which he said it. He brought his powers of persuasion to bear upon his hearers and convinced them without reason. "If he attempted to reason," says Horace Walpole, "the result was failure." But there is an appeal higher than that of reason (which, after all, can only touch the mind); there is the appeal to the very spirit of a man, and only genius can unlock that sanctuary.

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Pitt's contemporary, Butler, says: "Wonderful as was his eloquence, it was attended with this most important effect, that it impressed every hearer with a conviction that there was something in him even finer than his words; that the man was infinitely greater than the orator." This is why that sworn foe of Parliamentary speechifying, and all that it implies, Carlyle himself, finds in Pitt a "radiant spirit, after his own heart."

The man was greater, even, than his gifts. The organizer of victories was also the seer of visions, the dreamer of dreams. We may recognize, in his views on reform, on India—some will add on Ireland—"the trumpet of a prophecy."

So, as was inevitable, the conflict between Pitt and Walpole became, not a conflict of ideas, but a warring of personalities. It is amusing, in fact, to find Pitt, who, later, conducted the greatest war of the age, advocating a reduction in the number of troops because Walpole asked for a larger army! Then came the dispute about the Spanish Right of Search in the West Indies, long a grievance with the English, and one which Walpole, left to himself, seems to have been quite incapable of removing. The House sat and listened with angry attention, time after time, to long and hair-raising stories of Spanish cruelty, including the evidence of the famous Robert Jenkins, who dramatically displayed a dried-up something in a bottle, which he said was his own ear, of which he asserted the Spaniards had deprived him, while "he committed his soul to God and his cause to his country."

There were those who declared afterwards that, had his wig been removed, both ears would have been found intact. However——! Walpole, quite unmoved, proposed a general resolution, declaring our right to sail the Spanish seas unhindered, and asking for redress. Pitt demurred at this, but Walpole carried the day.

The spirit of the country, inflamed by "Jenkins's ear," was now thoroughly roused against Spain and her arrogance; and Admiral Haddock was sent "to cruise in the Mediterranean; a regiment was shipped to Georgia, and peremptory dispatches were presented by Keene to the Spanish Court." War seemed inevitable. But Spain took note of the Fleet and of the Regiment; noted, also, the marked inferiority of her own defences; with the result that, at the last moment, she offered financial settlement which Walpole eagerly welcomed. He boasted of the "Convention," then arranged, as his greatest service to the State.

But the benefits of the Convention were soon seen to be less than at first appeared. A mere £27,000 as against the British estimate of £340,000, for British losses; the disputes between the King of Spain and the South Sea Company left unresolved; and the Spanish Right of Search to stand over till a more convenient season. The country stormed. Pitt saw that his hour was come. Now, for the first time, he spoke with the Nation's voice. Horace Walpole (Robert's brother), had moved an address to the King, "thanking him for the Convention," and in the course of his speech had dwelt upon the "weakness of England,

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unbefriended abroad, and oppressed by excessive taxation at home."

In his magnificent reply, Pitt thundered against the Convention, and more particularly against its promoters. Winnington said that his speech contained "the prettiest words and the worst language he had ever heard." The Prince of Wales kissed Pitt in the House!

This speech marked a turning-point in Pitt's career. He knew that he had the people behind him, and that, when he spoke, his voice was England's voice. It was a thrilling experience, and his greatness responded to it "through all the finest fibres of his being." It was a trumpet call to War. "On October 19th, 1739, the Heralds solemnly proclaimed War at Temple Bar and at the Mansion House, amidst the frantic applause of the citizens and the ringing of Church bells." The Prince of Wales himself joined the Procession and drank to the success of the British arms.

And the conduct of the War did not improve Walpole's position. The general muddle, the unreadiness of the Fleet, gave Pitt ample opportunities to flay the existing administration. This is a sketch of Pitt's life up to the time of his marriage and in no sense a political history; but much could be written, much has been written, on both sides. Pitt and his young and brilliant following were, somewhat cynically, called the Patriots; upon which Walpole remarked bitterly: "A Patriot, Sir? Patriots spring up like mushrooms. I could raise fifty of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an

unreasonable or insolent demand, and up starts a patriot!"

Certainly Pitt's methods were a little cruel. He made Walpole writhe with his wit and irony. And when old Horace Walpole advised him sententiously that his "vehemence of gesture, theatrical emotion and exaggerated expressions might have been corrected had he conversed with 'such as have had more opportunities of acquiring knowledge, and more successful methods of communicating their sentiments,'" Pitt flung himself furiously upon him to accept "The atrocious crime of being a young man," and flared out into "Much more is he to be abhorred who, as he has advanced in age, has receded in virtue, and becomes more wicked with less temptation; who prostitutes himself for money which he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of his country!" So little reverence had he for the elders in the House! But after Walpole fell, they grew to understand one another better, and in 1755 we find Pitt writing that "Walpole, a truly English Minister, thought well of me, and died at peace with me."

Moreover, in later years, he came to see that in many things "the cautious old statesman had been in the right," and with his usual candour he did not shrink from owning his change of opinion. That was one of the greatest things about Pitt. He never minded owning that he had made a mistake; that he had been in the wrong. Notably on the claim for "No search" by the Spaniards, upon which he had, in earlier days, been so fiery and so positive in

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his support, he said in 1751: "I was once an advocate for that claim; it was when I was very young and sanguine. But now I am ten years older; I have considered public affairs more coolly, and am convinced that the claim of *no search* respecting British vessels near Spanish America can never be obtained, unless Spain were so reduced as to consent to any terms her conqueror might think proper to impose." And there is something pathetic in this last word of his on Walpole: "I constantly opposed him as a Minister, and yet, after he resigned, I always spoke well of him as a man. Gentlemen may laugh if they please, but I can perceive no joke in what I have said. It is only a proof that my opposition did not proceed from any personal resentment, nor my praise from any desire to flatter."

There is surely no wonder that, if William Pitt inspired fear, he also inspired love.

His next great success in the House was over the Hanoverian Troops. The preference shown to these foreign mercenaries by the King, so natural in itself, considering his nationality, was, as naturally, exasperating to his British subjects, who saw themselves looked upon by the Throne as a kind of adjunct—and an unloved adjunct—of a little foreign State. Pitt never spared the King in his references to Hanover in the House. "That delightful country!" It was to Pitt's speeches, and to the impression they made on the country at large, that the Estimates at last came to show no further items of pay to Hanoverians.

During this year, 1744, Pitt was really ill with

a terrible attack of gout, and had to spend most of his time at Bath. Indeed, from now onwards, these attacks occurred at more and more frequent intervals, crippling his life and work, and causing him untold suffering and inconvenience.

In 1745 came the young Prince Charles Edward, to make his gallant, but ineffectual, stand for the throne of his forefathers. The King was away in Hanover ("that delightful country!"), and the British nation looked to Pitt for leadership. The Prince was winning all along the line. His "Seven men of Moidart" had increased to a considerable army. He carried Scotland by storm with his victory at Preston Pans. There were very few troops in England, and the English Government was at a loss to know what steps to take. To Pitt belongs the credit of insisting that our troops in Flanders should be instantly withdrawn for Home Defence. Meanwhile, the Prince had marched, almost unopposed, as far as Derby; and the Capital was in a panic. As Pitt, four years later, confessed, "though convinced that the spirit of England was sincere and true, yet I am afraid if the rebel leader could have persuaded his people to have ventured a battle against the Duke (of Cumberland) in Staffordshire, or to have given him the slip, marched towards London, and fought a battle near this City, the fate of England would have depended on the issue of that battle; for if they had obtained a victory, and made themselves masters of London, I question if the spirit of the populace would not have taken a very different turn."*

* Pitt, quoted by Basil Williams. Vol. I, p. 144

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But the Prince was overpersuaded, to his lifelong regret. Like most of the Stuarts, his judgment was better than that of the people round him, only he could not trust it. The same thing ruined his father and grandfather before him. It is a notable family failing and deserves more attention than it has ever received at the hands of the Historian.

The next year came a sudden and a very brief wave of unpopularity for Pitt; for when the English troops had been recalled to aid in the '45, there was no one save the Hanoverians to give the promised help to Flanders. Pitt never shrank from changing his mind, nor from owning the change to anyone; and now he not only confessed to a change of view, but gave his reasons. On this subject his former speeches had been too bitter and uncompromising to be forgotten in the House, and Pitt felt acutely the taunts and sneers of those who remembered and resented his change of front. And when he accepted a post under the Government as Paymaster of the Forces, there were those who did not spare him.

But this was not for long. His genius for administration, his equity, his entire fitness for the task, soon won him more than ever of the country's admiration and regard. Pitt was Paymaster for nine years, and in those nine years he entirely reformed that office. It had been the custom for the Paymaster to have the use of all the Public Funds which passed through his hands, so that he could put out to interest to his own advantage, such enormous sums as £80,000 at a time. Of this Pitt would have

nothing. Though a relatively poor man, with great obligations, he never touched a farthing of the Public Money. He won, at once, the entire love and trust of his subordinates. Everyone liked to work under him. They caught his enthusiasm, they respected his fastidious honesty—in an age when such honesty was regarded as quixotic. Moreover, Pitt would allow no waste of public money by others. And his keen sense of justice found out a cure for the ills of the long-suffering Chelsea Pensioners, the first instalments of whose pensions had often been delayed by as much as a year, and who had to tide over that miserable time by the help of moneylenders, who charged enormous interest. This, in addition to the Commission demanded by the Pay Office Clerks was a real and tragic grievance. He brought in a Bill (passed two days before his wedding), “providing that six months’ pension should be paid in advance, that all future mortgages on pensions should be void, and that commissions should no longer be exacted by pension officers.”

The next few years were years of quiet, wise administration; Pitt was now sure of himself, sure also that the country would look to him in any crisis. In many ways he was leading a happy and successful life, marred only by his tragic ill-health, and—whether he acknowledged it or not—by loneliness. He now had an income of £5,000 a year; he had an interest in the estates of the old Duchess of Marlborough, his kinswoman, who always took an interest in him and in his welfare; and he began to indulge his strange taste for laying out country

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estates and expending all his spare time and thought in the landscape gardening then so fashionable a pastime.

But, having brought one place to the pitch of perfection he desired, he was apt to tire of it, and seek others. His was a strange, restless, unsatisfied soul at this time. In all his forty-six years, though he had many friends, many who loved, almost who worshipped him—and among these, not a few were women—with the exception of that far-away episode at Besançon, he had found no one on whom to expend all that deep and passionate love of which he was so soon to prove himself the master.

He stayed with his friends a good deal; he stayed systematically at Tunbridge Wells, and later, even more frequently, at Bath, where he was made a freeman of the City, and where he built himself a house.

Among the country houses at which he was a frequent and welcome guest during these years were Hagley, the home of the Lytteltons, Encombe, where lived his cousin, John Pitt; Radway, near Edgehill, the home of Saunderson Miller, where he was often a fellow guest with Henry Fielding, the novelist, his old school friend.

There is a print (issued in 1748) which shows Pitt at Tunbridge Wells, with Dr. Johnson, Colley Cibber, Garrick, Richardson, Whiston (translator of Josephus), Lyttelton, and others, all personages in their own day, "and all well known to Pitt."

He told Garrick he thought him the best actor England had ever had; he had a great

of William Pitt

friendship for Garrick, which lasted all his life; he even advised him over the production of some of his plays. Mrs. Montagu became a close friend—probably his greatest woman friend—after his estrangement from his sister Ann. But between Ann and her brother there had been for many years a very dear and real bond of affection. He had always been ready to serve her, always most gently careful of her welfare in every way. Probably it was the care of Ann which had taught him those many little things—that innate knowledge of what a woman likes and needs,—which is so acceptable to women, so necessary if a man is ever to make a woman happy. For he seems to have had all the graces when the time came for him to need them!

We have a picture of him at this time by Hoare, which he himself thought an excellent likeness, and which shows him very tall, very thin, very self-assured, beautifully dressed. He was graceful in all his movements and stood with dignity and repose. But his greatest charm of all lay in his wonderful grey eyes, eyes which turned black with emotion or at night. It has been said that, when Pitt was greatly moved, the fire of those eyes was such that no one could look him in the face.

As a boy, he had been shy: now he had long overcome that shyness; and was witty, even brilliant, in social life. He liked the society of women, was even accounted rather a Squire of Dames! They admired him, and sought his company.

But, so far, he had shown no inclination to

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marry. He naturally looked upon his delicate health as a very great drawback; until lately, too, his financial prospects had not warranted the kind of marriage which was the only kind that Pitt was capable of proposing to himself. Nothing less than an alliance with one of the great families of England would have satisfied his pride. For Pitt was always a proud man, and with his habit of looking at himself from the outside, he would not have tolerated anything which could have lowered him in his own eyes. His greatest friends of all were still the Grenvilles; for twenty years he had stayed with them at Wotton and at Stowe; five brothers there were, and one sister. But of the sister, until quite lately, Mr. Pitt had seemed almost unaware.

Lord Rosebery's account of the Grenville rise to power is not a little diverting. "They were not only a brotherhood," he says, "they were a confraternity." All the brothers, even the sailor, Thomas, entered the House of Commons. "What is admirable indeed is the pertinacity and concentration of this strange, dogged race, and their devotion to their chief; they were a political Society of Jesus. Their objects were not exalted, but from generation to generation, with a patience little less than Chinese, they pursued, and ultimately obtained, what they desired. They were, of course, unpopular, because their scheme was too obvious; . . . they were not brilliant, but in every generation they had a man of sufficient ability, two Prime Ministers among them, to champion their cause. They built, no doubt, on inadequate foundations,

but these lasted just long enough to enable the structure to be crowned. It is a singular story; there is nothing like it in the History of England: it resembles rather the persistent annals of the Hive. Pitt is concerned with only two of the Grenvilles, Richard and George. "These two," says Lord Rosebery, "had this, at least, in common—an amazing opinion of themselves. . . . They resented the slightest idea of any disparity between themselves and Pitt. . . . When Pitt had raised Britain from abasement to the first position in the world, when he was indisputably the greatest orator and the greatest power in the country, the Grenvilles considered themselves as, at least, Pitt's equals, and him as only one, and not the first, of a triumvirate." Well, allowing for that, they were yet Pitt's very good friends, and they had been his friends long before his rise to fame and fortune. Lady Hester Grenville, the only sister of these brothers, and the other writer of the love-letters, was thirty-three at this time. She had lived the pleasant, leisured, social life of her age and station. There is a portrait which shows her at the age of twenty-nine as a vigorous personality, full of life, strong and of firm character. She has auburn hair and a pleasant, if not beautiful, face. There is something wholesome and reassuring about her; she looks as if she could be trusted not to let one down; to deal with life adequately, and see things with a sane and even mind. She looks, also, a little pleased with herself perhaps; one remembers that she is a Grenville. She had lived a great deal in the country; was fond of country life—riding,

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walking, climbing hills. She had been bred up in politics, and had a great many friends. She must also have had a good many suitors, for she was wealthy—and again, was she not a Grenville?

Ten years before, her brother Jimmy wrote to her “rejoicing that there is a prospect of getting you off with Simon Truelove. He really deserves to have you, and it is impossible to hope for a more advantageous prospect. My dear Meg, you grow old” (she was twenty-three!) “and it is time to think of a decent retirement from business.” When she was twenty-five, there was much talk of a certain Captain Geary, “who would seem to have touched her affections during a summer they spent together at Tunbridge Wells. Her cousin, Richard Berenger, an authority on horsemanship, wherein they had a taste in common, at one time had tender passages with her; and there are dark allusions to yet another suitor, who was rejected, but still proved troublesome.” Now she was thirty-three and not yet married!

Von Ruville suggests “a very likely reason for Lady Hester’s obduracy was that she had long admired and perhaps unconsciously loved, her brother’s eloquent friend. . . . Her sister-in-law had for some years divined that information about him would be acceptable to her. . . . Jane Hamilton, too, writing soon after her own marriage to Lord Cathcart, in 1753, follows up some charming advice with the pointed conclusion: ‘Je vous recommend un mariage comme le mien, ma chère Amie, il n’y à rien de pareil pour le bonheur. . . . How could I be

so stupid to omit telling you that I saw Mr. Pitt at Bath Court on Sunday, and he looks well and is thought to be so, but is a little thin?" . . . There is no doubt at all in my mind that Lady Hester Grenville had adored the great man for years. He was so much more brilliant even than her brothers—a frequent guest at Wotton and at Stowe. She must so often have listened to his talk, and noted his distinction. She saw how well dressed he was, how finely he wore his fine clothes; how witty he was, how fastidious! For always he viewed himself as a person apart; a little critically, but, perhaps, not entirely without approval. Then she must have come under the spell of those wonderful eyes, of that mysterious power of making himself interesting, of arresting their attention, which goes straight to the heart of women.

For there are some men singled out for women's love, and Pitt was one of these. They do not seek it consciously, though they are by no means averse to it. But, whether they want it or no, it is theirs as a birthright.

Had Lady Hester lived to-day we should possibly have known more. Had these two been lovers of the twentieth century I don't think they could have waited nineteen years before they found each other. But one never can tell. Love is a jealous god, and his ways past finding out. It seems, on the face of it, a waste of life. One can imagine her mind—can read her very thoughts, through the silence of those nineteen years. She loved Pitt. She often saw him. That made things easier. Love can tolerate silence in the presence of the beloved.

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She had always the knowledge that if he went, yet he was sure to come again. Her brothers' friendship with him made her safe. Meanwhile, she could always watch and note and admire. She was never without news of him. His health interested her, sometimes distressed her (a sure sign); and she could always hear whether Mr. Pitt's gout was better or no. There were so many open doors. The circumstances of her life made those nineteen years tolerable; and she was a young woman of excellent breeding and well-regulated mind. (Imagine, for instance, Claire Claremont in similar circumstances!)

It may be asked whether she could not have allowed Mr. Pitt to see that she took an interest in him. Hardly, I think. Mr. Pitt was somewhat formidable; he had never taken any notice of her at all. It cannot have been easy to see him as a lover. He was high upon his pedestal; Lady Hester bowed her head humbly, and worshipped from a distance. Nor, I imagine, did the distance worry her; probably, even, she did not wish it lessened, would have been rather shocked had anyone suggested it to her. Hers was the humility of a love which is content with very little, capable of great giving, ready to respond, but diffident. I do not think it ever occurred to her in those years that she, who found Mr. Pitt so splendid, could ever be of the least interest to Mr. Pitt. There is that type. There are those who give and give, and are happy in their giving,—and ask for no return.

At first she was only fourteen—a child in the schoolroom. Mr. Pitt was twenty-seven. She would hardly come within his emotional horizon.

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Ten years later—twenty-four and thirty-seven—and still they meet on different planes. He seems never to have been interested in her at all.

Another eight years—and suddenly there came a change. It may be doubted whether Mr. Pitt knew what it portended. But Lady Hester must have known her own heart by now. "She treasured up some insignificant notes by him more than a year before he declared himself."

These are the few notes she had kept so carefully:

"Mr. Pitt presents his most humble compliments to Lady Hester Grenville: his ill Star still over-rules. Lady Brook is engaged and Miss Hamilton not able to leave Lady Archibald, who goes to-day to lie at Chiswick for some nights, he most humbly recommends himself to Lady Hester's pardon, for all the trouble he gives Her and to Her pity for his extreme disappointment. he shall never dare name South Lodge to Her Ladyship again: but if she would be so good to make her own Party and name some Day, the Stars would be kept in better order."

It is impossible to be sure, but I think this is the first time that Mr. Pitt ever wrote to Lady Hester Grenville. She was to have gone with a party to see his house, South Lodge, but the scheme fell through, for reasons he gives in the letter. Whether or no she did make up her own party and go another day, we have no means of finding out. The letter is formal enough, but a pretty expression of regret. It belongs to the year 1753 or a little earlier, for Mr. Pitt gave up South Lodge in 1753.

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The notes continue, but in what order it is impossible to say, for none is dated. But all belong to the same year, 1753.

"Mr. Pitt presents a thousand most humble thanks to Lady Hester Grenville; he is tolerably well to-day, considering the severe weather and infinitely sensible of the great honour her Ladyship dos him."

"Mr. Pitt presents his most humble compliments to Lady Hester Grenville, is infinitely honoured by her Ladyship's very polite attention, and if she is at home after Dinner and will be so good as to admit a travelling ghost (?) guest (?) just arrived, he begs leave to wait on her Ladyship about 6 this evening."

"Mr. Pitt begs leave to present his most humble compliments to Lady Hester Grenville and to repeat his very gratefull acknowledgments of Her Ladyship's great goodness to Him. he is setting out for Tunbridge this morning in . . . at want of the help of the waters . . . best compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Grenville."

"Mr. Pitt presents his most humble compliments to Lady Hester Grenville and many more thanks than he can express for Her Ladyship's extreme goodness. ashamed as he is to be so troublesome, he will, if he finds it necessary, accept the most obliging offer, he hopes to get out of Town this morning, tho' the weather dos not promise much. he continues much as he was yesterday. his best compliments attend Mr. Grenville."

"Saturday Morning."

"Mr. Pitt presents his most humble com-

pliments to Lady Hester Grenville and begs leave to repeat his most grateful thanks for her Ladyship's extreme goodness to Him in allowing him to be at Her House; which permission he proposes to profit of, when he comes to Town, which he intends very soon. he is infinitely ashamed of the inconvenience her Ladyship's goodness, he fears, puts Her to. he continues far from well, and hopes to get to Tunbridge by the first of June.

"Saturday Wickham."

"Mr. Pitt hopes Lady Hester Grenville will pardon his disobedience in begging leave to assure Her Ladyship under his hand, how infinitely he is obliged to Her for the honour of her enquiries. he is, upon the whole, not better (as he thinks himself) tho' he is now and then told that he mends a little. he hopes Lady Hester is in perfect health."

Mr. Pitt is politely thankful for Lady Hester's kind enquiries.

He calls upon her one evening, just after his arrival in Town. He tells her, more than once, something of his plans. "He is setting out for Tunbridge this morning."

He is grateful for the offer of her house (or hospitality) in Town. He is certainly touched by her evident interest in him. There is a growing friendship. He gravely "hopes Lady Hester is in perfect health." But not even she could read more into these notes, although she kept them among her treasures. Love is enough! But there, for a year, the matter rested. Mr. Pitt seems to the casual onlooker to have been a little blind. One's sympathies are with Lady

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Hester. . . . After all, what is a woman to do? But he was so splendid! Already the greatest man in England. And he carried his greatness with such an air. There was no mistaking him for other than he was, with his tragic gesture of illness and fatigue, his fine clothes, so finely worn, and his interesting dark eyes flashing their pathetic fire her way. . . . "There is none like him, none; nor will be when our summers have decreased." . . .

Was it possible? Would it indeed ever come into her life, such happiness as that? Would she be worthy of it, if it came? What gifts had she to offer in return?

Well, for one thing, she had her wonderful devotion.

As the years showed, she was the ideal wife for him. And the match, to an outsider, was, from a worldly point of view, in every way an asset to Mr. Pitt. Not that she could have been expected in such a mood to see things quite like that. It would knit him into the strong clan of the Grenvilles by a bond too close to break. And he who was so much greater than the Grenvilles could yet be helped by their powerful support. And, somewhat insufferably, one feels the brothers were not unconscious of that.

And still Mr. Pitt walked, tragically, with his eyes shut. It seems almost a stupidity on the part of so great a man! So does love lead blindly even to the very edge of the abyss! But it was a delicate situation for anyone who saw. And it must have meant not a little suffering to the lady herself. She knew . . . ah! she knew!

of William Pitt

But what was Mr. Pitt thinking about it all? Or, indeed, did he even think?

She had abundant common sense. That helped her through. One does not doubt that had this happiness been, after all, denied her, she would have survived and managed to make quite a tolerable thing of life, in spite of the loss of all her world. . . . She might even have fallen back on Simon Truelove—or another! I don't think she was the kind of woman to break her heart, even for Mr. Pitt. One envies such admirable coolness of heart and mind. It was peculiarly an attribute of the society in which she lived. All the conventions of her life—the very saneness of her own temperament—combined to help her through. But, let it be confessed, she lacks the compelling interest of the great lover. The world will always thrill to the passion of a Heloise rather than the patience of a Lady Hester. And rightly. For the Lady Hesters know very little of the very best things of all.

She had the curious tenacity of all the Grenvilles; a sort of patience which gets what it wants in the end by sheer passive, purposeful waiting.

The year 1754 did not open very propitiously. Mr. Pitt was at Bath, more ill than usual. Later, he dragged himself back to London, where he was soon absorbed in the political situation, which indeed was, of itself, enough to engage his thoughts. He managed to fight through until August, when he again "began to want a little repairs." So he went to Astrop Wells for a month. . . . So little thought had

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he of what the Fates held in store for him that he even planned a visit for the last part of September to Holte, in Hampshire. . . . From there he would go on to Bath . . . later, perhaps, on a visit to John Pitt, at Encombe.

But something changed his plans.

Did Lady Hester write to him? There is no letter to be found. But it would have been the merest formal note of invitation. And although we know she kept such things from him, he did not keep hers. There was no suggestion in his mind of love for her.

Anyhow, something changed his plans, and he went to Wotton in September. It was beautiful weather—a late summer. He had stayed there so often, so often! But he had never seemed to care for wandering about the park and gardens with her before. Perhaps he remembered her evident interest in him last year and was grateful. Perhaps . . . oh! what if . . . who knows what she thought?

How is a woman to show a man that she loves him? May she, indeed, make any sign at all? It is always a difficult situation, for the woman. I can't help thinking that, in some subtle way, Lady Hester did let him see. She speaks in her letters of her family's surprise "at the blindness which had prevailed," as if they at least had seen! Anyhow, something opened his eyes. Maybe they were ready to be opened. He was now a great man—a worthy suitor for the daughter of the house of Grenville, even in its own estimation.

He had probably had thoughts of marrying. But his health was so precarious! Would anyone

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risk it? . . . After all, she had seemed to care, last year. She quite evidently cared now. She was full of sympathy. She was the sort of companion he wanted—dignified, sensible, sufficiently good looking; ready to become a great lady; above all quite sure that he was immeasurably her superior, which was, of course, just as it should be. William Pitt would rule in his own house as he ruled the nation. He rather liked—was possibly even a little flattered by—her ardent adoration. It even looked as if she might. . . . The veil began to lift! Then a strange thing happened to Mr. Pitt himself. He found quite suddenly, to his great surprise, that he cared too! Why, he must have cared all along and yet not have known it. . . .

At last, the hour struck. It was a fine September morning. . . . A stroll in the grounds before lunch would be very pleasant. Would Lady Hester care just to go down as far as the lake, perhaps? "I will walk with you if I may." . . . Yes, the lady was charmed. . . . Pitt saw it all coming. He was a great political strategist . . . and he probably thought out this campaign as carefully as any other. And Lady Hester, herself, could hardly be unaware by now of the swift drawing near of Fate. How charged with emotion must have been every word, every look, that morning! Mr. Pitt's sigh, as he slowly rose from his chair and permitted himself to accompany her. . . . Lady Hester's own quick acceptance of his suggestion. . . . Would he? Did he? Was it possible? . . . What a beautiful new plum-coloured coat

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Mr. Pitt was wearing! How all his things became him! What a splendid figure he was in these beautiful surroundings! A fitting background for his greatness! It was a late September morning. How fresh, how bright! The bluest of blue skies, and just a touch of gold upon the leaves. How lovely were the shadows of the clouds . . . so still, so clear, reflected in the lake. A little wistfully, she wished he would say something really kind; something she could remember. And still there was no sound. It seemed as if they were both waiting . . . waiting.

It was good to be near him. . . . She felt safe, always, when he was near . . . a curious feeling of rest and comfort and peace. Who that has loved will not have felt the same? . . . Suddenly, she never quite knew what had happened, they were speaking to each other as they had never spoken before. . . . Had it indeed always been like this? Did Time stand still? . . . They must have known each other all their lives! . . .

II

THE LOVE-LETTERS

They had about a week together, and then he went to London. On the evening he left she wrote him a little note, overcome with depression at the withdrawal of his presence. But the note has disappeared. Possibly, in the light of the next letter she wrote, he may have destroyed it by her wish.

Meanwhile, he had written her his first love-letter.

London, October 3, 1754

WAS ever the most amiable goodness like that of Lady Hester Grenville, or felicity like mine? but a few delightfull days have pass't, since it woud have surpassed all my hopes to be but suffered to tell the wishes my heart had presumed to form, and to have thought the smallest of yours not unfavourable to mine woud have been the Sum of all happiness. your noble treatment of a Heart so totally in your power, with every adorable circumstance of the most generous and gentle pity, had left me nothing I could ask of Heaven and you, but soon to return to your feet, except the letter you have blest me with. am I then reserved to read the dear avowal of sentiments as interesting to my glory as to my Happiness, and to feed my soul upon this infinitely endearing mark of Confidence and sweetest pledge of all I wish to live for? and all this generous compassion, which only yourself could feel cloth'd in that charming language which only you can find? those banks of the Pond you so sweetly remember, to me are every way delightfull; how do I love them for your dear Presence there one morning, and for

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your kind absence from them another? I live on the hope of soon having cause to find them more and more delightfull, on the first, most endearing consideration, my journey you do me the honour to enquire after was safe; my business of various sorts have been prosperous; for I found means yesterday to make many of them short, as well as to despatch many, the day being surely one of the longest of the whole year. I have disposed things for finishing all that remains to-morrow, and hope, God willing, to be at Stow Friday, and to look at you once more, and a million, Sunday morning, if not Saturday night. every way it is you that help me to dispatch. in all the more common business I think of you and double my diligence, to return where you are and to see and hear you the sooner. in the more interesting I think of you, that I have the glory to be yours, and the happy, happy Permission to call you mine, and am animated by the thought to Discharge any Part I have to sustain, and to aspire to be less unworthy of you. Stow still holds me in most sensible sollicitudes. but I would fain not augure anything gloomy? can Friendship, which I have received so much from, that I might almost hope for everything, fail me, when Love and you where I had nothing to pretend, have consented to



LADY HESTER GRENVILLE

from a painting in the possession of E. G. Pretyman, Esq.

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of William Pitt

give me happiness? yes, I already fear it may; nay, feel that perhaps it ought, when I think what your establishment calls for. I am then, I cannot but be, in infinite disquietudes for Stow. in the painfull interval that lies between, I shall, I do now, press your sweet letter to my Heart, run over every word, kiss every letter of it with transports of Love and gratitude, blessing the noble, pitying Heart that dictated and the dear Hand that wrote it. ever, ever devotedly yours.

How infinite are my obligations to Wotton? I venture to send no compliments, much less acknowledgments.

The Love-Letters

There is no doubt about it. He was very much in love. And the letter shows quite clearly that he had been in love for some days before he told her. He speaks of his heart as "so totally in your power." All through he lays stress on her pity—a new thing for Mr. Pitt! There was, mingled with her adoration of him, a curious, almost maternal, solicitude, prompted by his evident ill-health. In all his letters to her he is oddly reticent about his own doings. Politics are never so much as mentioned, and this is all the more remarkable from the fact that Lady Hester, born and bred in the political world, was quite as interested in all its news as he. Probably he turned with relief from the arena where his life was fought out to the rest and beauty of their new-found love. It would have seemed to him almost a blasphemy to bring the heat and turmoil of the day into that hallowed sanctuary.

There is only one note of anxiety. His worldly wealth was no match for hers. He fears lest the family should demand a wealthier suitor, "when I think of what your establishment calls for . . ." Before she had time to answer this letter they met again, at Wotton. But this time they only had five days together, for Mr. Pitt must needs go at once, for his health's sake, to Bath, for which place he left her on October 9th.

That evening Lady Hester wrote him the first letter of hers we have:

of William Pitt

I I

October 9, 1754

Wednesday night

IF Success has attended my earnest wishes, this letter will find you safely arrived at Bath with the same Health and above all the same Sentiments with which you left this Place. It has been a melancholy day, and a gloomy evening, without a bright Star to enliven it. The storms have given me a thousand fears, not for Wotton or any part of its contents, but for poor travellers whose equipages cd. scarce exclude such driving winds and rain. If it was not for the dangers they might incur from it, I should easily pardon its effects upon the Beauty of the Scene, since no Light cou'd give it the Merit it has lost. All my happiness is to be found at present in myself, which, tho' esteemed by the wise so great an Advantage, I am far at this time from thinking the greatest. How shall I carry on the time till Sunday ignorant of your situation after a journey that must, I am afraid, have been unpleasant in more circumstances than I cou'd wish! What is worse even, that good day will bring me information very short of my wishes. It must be Wednesday before I can learn that you are settled safely in your own

The Love-Letters

Lodgings. I have been the best part of the day in conversation with my Brother, upon Subjects useful and Intersting to my favourite Views. This evening, bad as it was, I walk't with Him to the Bridge and new Plantations, which had a mark upon them that secured my approbation, and which will make everything that bears it current with me. The Inclos'd letter I recd. this evening and am charmed to have my own sentiments traced by a Hand Dearer to me now than ever. It belongs but to one Person to inspire so universal a stile upon the same subject. You will find by Harry, Jemmy is return'd and that to-morrow they intend being at Stowe. I have writ a Letter which I propose shou'd meet Jemmy at Ailsbury, and have taken care to assure him of your anxious Impatience to know where you cou'd address yourself to Him and that I was to have (been) intrusted with a letter from you to Him, but that as you was to go to-day I was obliged I had given encouragement to a scheme that was to deprive me of your company. 'Tis true that I remember'd it but I wou'd not mention it. I write to-night, tho' it's Late, that my Brother may carry this Letter with Him to-morrow to Ailsbury. Most affect. Compts. attend you from Him and from my Sister.

Something infinitely beyond from myself.

It is easy to read between the lines how much she missed him—how all-absorbing was her love, her deep devotion. There had been a great storm and she feared for him on his journey—feared not only unknown dangers but the possible harm to his health. She can have no peace till she hears of his safe arrival. So closely does fear tread on the heels of love! After sending him the most affectionate compliments of all her family she adds wistfully: "Something infinitely beyond from myself." And I think she was not a woman who found it easy to say such things. "Infinitely beyond" . . . How the words touched the lonely lover his next letter tells us with very real pathos.

On October 12th he wrote to her from Bath:

The Love-Letters

III

Bath, October 12, 1754

How tedious was yesterday which refused me the only resource in absence, a Post to convey the unceasing wishes of my Heart? this Day then I may have the honour and consolation to address a few words to my Lady Hester Grenville, the dear object to which my soul directs every thought; and in which I had so lately the happiness to fix my every look with delight, and to pour out my Heart at her feet, in effusions of the most respectful Passion, sweeten'd and endeared to me by the happy sense of Infinite and most touching Obligations. this was my exalted felicity a few days ago: the next degree is to recall the delightful scene, and to tell you of all the happiness of which your adorable self and your most generous and amiable compassion has been, is, and ever will be, the never failing Source. my journey (for your goodness has made it not impertinent to talk to you of myself) was expeditious.

I arrived here Thursday night, with tired Horses and a crippled Chaise, a little sooner than I had calculated when I left Wotton. I

told myself that I was going to Lady Hester Grenville, not from Her; and that the sooner I got to Bath, the sooner i should be at London. can you wonder at my expedition? or will you think it such? Can you? will you not rather kindly think I travel no faster than I ought. your obliging commands to me were, not to hurry my self. how can I obey them, but by flying if I coud, towards you? for my mind knows no repose, but in exerting its little Celerity to put aside and surmount every obstacle and delay that cruelly interpose Themselves between happiness and me. I found Mr. Nidham answer as I wish my overtures to Him about Ld. Hillsborough; and I took it as an earnest, how you propitiate all my attempts. I wish Mr. Grenville would suffer me to propose, at a proper time, a kind of arbitration of the differences between them. to talk for ever of the name of Grenville, let me tell you how auspicious that name was to me in a little distress: being reduced to my own Legs, up Lansdown Hill, what coud I find at the Top of it to shelter me from the Storm that drove but the Monument of Sir Beville Grenville? A few thoughts I gave to the unfortunate merit of the Dead; but the sweet recollection it was of the living Charms and excellences of that loved

The Love-Letters

Name, that made me bear unhurt all the inclemencies of a stormy night. where have I room to say how much I am Mr. and Mrs. Grenville's?

He had arrived safely, but there had been a dreadful storm on the way, so that he speaks of "tired horses and a crippled chaise." He had had, in fact, to get out and walk through that night of storm up Lansdowne Hill, but he had found shelter from the fierceness of wind and rain under the shade of Sir Beville Grenville's monument, and this gives him the opportunity of a graceful compliment to the beloved name, "the sweet recollection of which made me bear unhurt all the inclemencies of a stormy night."

Meanwhile, Lady Hester writes, on the 13th:

The Love-Letters

I V

Wotton, October 13th (1754)

SUNDAY is at last arrived and soon I may flatter myself with having the joy of a letter which is necessary to my happiness. T'is not that I can be perfectly satisfied till I can be told of your safe arrival at Bath, which is an account that imports my Peace extremely, for the terrible weather we have had, particularly Friday, has filled me with solicitude. I placed you that night at Bibery (Ribery?) Mills, and comforted myself in thinking it was a low situation and guarded by Hills from the violence of the Wind, which might otherwise have demolished chimnies, etc. for our Troy shook to its foundations. I pique my self upon not saying anything in this or my future letters upon the Evil of Absence, for it is a necessary one, and must be submitted to. Therefore, tho' I every moment feel how much I lose from it, I will be silent upon a sacrifice of what is dear to me, in the proportion of its merit, which is the highest rate I can measure it by and implies what no other Terms can express. I sent my Letter as I told you I intended, to intercept Jemmy at Ailsbury, in which I succeeded, and the con-

of William Pitt

sequence was that he immediately changed his course and came to Wotton, to thank me, as he said, for giving him the one Man in the whole World he shou'd have chose for his Honour and his pleasure, to call by that Name. He flattered me vastly, upon the letter I writ to Him, which made me feel how much I ow'd to the influence of my Divine Inspirer. He left us Friday to go to Stow and will write to you from thence to-day. The Governor accompanied Him but left a commission with me for you which he wou'd not have troubled you with, but that he flatters Himself you will be tempted to forgive Him in favour of the hand it passes thro'.

May one trust to your goodness? Lodgings is the Subject of His business, and he wou'd beg the favour of you to give orders to one of your Servants to take for Him the following number of rooms wherever he can find them in the Quarter the nearest to you, which is the quality the most essential to them. A Bed-chamber, with a closet or second room for the reception of the wardrobe and baggage. A Parlour for seeing his Company, and two garrets for his Servants, which concludes my charge from Him, except presenting his best Compliments and saying that he proposes being at

The Love-Letters

Bath Saturday next at farthest and making you his excuses Himself.

Friday, the representative from Stowe assisted at the little Charlotte's receiving her Name. No compliments were spared upon another occasion and great surprise express't at the blindness which had prevail'd, and which they appear'd very fond of insisting upon. They left us yesterday and I notified my-self for waiting upon them till Friday next with my Brother and Sister, but having weigh'd since that their company leaves them Wednesday next and that my visit, not being made alone wou'd want the air of being particular and on purpose, which seems essential in the present case, I am determin'd to go on Wednesday morning early enough to arrive before Breakfast, not entirely to lose seeing my two Brothers who come hither that day, in order to pursue the different roads of Bath and London. I flatter myself this resolution will be approved by you which is the seal that is wanting to confirm my opinion that it is right. Jemmy pass't thro' Bath on his way back, and visited a certain house in the Circus, which he admires extremely, being struck with the beauty of the situation which is no small proof of its merits, as he never commends to show his taste.

of William Pitt

You see it is not necessary that I should have a letter to answer to make me write. The pleasure I take in an Employment which speaks my sentiments is a sufficient inducement, but it wou'd add a joy of which every expression wou'd partake, if I had before me those fond assurances which are my triumph and my pleasure and which I flatter myself your heart at all times dictates to Her whom you have made Yours. A word I love to repeat, Because I know You love to read it. My Brother and Sister have charged me with their most affectionate compts. to you. The latter bids me tell you she has taken strange Liberties about directions she has given, but thinks however she shall not want forgiveness. The Letter I propose to have from you by next Friday's Post shou'd be directed to Stowe, as also the Sunday after. Then to Dr. Wotton. You'll allow a Preference, for reasons that I wou'd not name. I shall be too impatient to hear of you Wednesday, not to take very secure Measures for not exposing my-self to be butcher'd by that cruel Person call'd Delay. Adieu.

The Love-Letters

There is always a practical note in her letters.

She has not yet heard from him; and after again expressing her inevitable fears of the ill-effects the storm may have had upon his delicate health, she tells him that she " piques herself " upon saying nothing in this or any of her letters about the evil of absence, " for it is a necessary one and must be submitted to." She also asks him to find lodgings in Bath, as near his own as possible for her brother Femmy (James Grenville), and quite minutely gives instructions as to the rooms he will need, including " two garrets for the servants." This same brother, Femmy, had at once—upon her letter announcing her engagement to Pitt,—hastened to Wotton, to thank her for " giving him the one man in the whole world he should have chosen for his love and his pleasure." Femmy had also complimented her on her letter to him, and she thinks she must have caught an echo of Pitt's own eloquence.

The house in the Circus referred to in the letter was No. 7, a house which Pitt was building for himself. How she loves writing to him! There is nothing to rival such a charming way of spending her time.

The next letter (October 14th) is from him:

of William Pitt

v

(October)

Monday 14, 1754

IF I was reconciled to our Post for going Saturday, how infinite are my obligations to it for coming yesterday? how rich a Packet fraught with two such letters? I seem to live only for and by your adored self and yours. my days, my happy days, of more delightfull texture than Madame de Sevigné's (only *d'or et de soye*) are *filer D'amour et d'amitie*; and I can mark and reckon time by nothing but fresh and accumulated proofs of the most generous goodness and kindest Partiality to me from that dear House, to whom alone it belongs to have such a Sister and such Brothers. But to talk of my Lady Hester Grenville by herself, or rather to have the honour and felicity to be alone with her in the blue drawing-room, can you expect me then to have but just the same sentiments I had when I left Wotten? is it in my power not to add continually esteem to esteem, respect to respect and gratitude, Passion, Adoration without end, every hour I live? for every hour shows you to me in lights more amiable, and tells me Gratitude, Reason and Love are here but one thing who speaks, who looks, who writes, but

The Love-Letters

above all, who could have the generosity to feel as you? I am too blest with the adorable sentiments, perhaps, to dwell upon the manner: but can I not tell you that your letters are certainly the prettiest that ever flow'd from a Pen, and that they breathe a charm and elegance of expression and delicacy of Turn, that makes the Beauty of Them equal the infinite goodness. let me read for ever that "Something infinitely beyond," which could make even the conclusion of your letter sweet to my soul, above my powers of Language to tell you. The first words of your next letter shall be as sweet to me: give it me soon and make me as blest as I can be, till these eyes see their only wish again. my most affectionate compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Grenville. I hope the little Christian is well.

Quite a little letter, but full of his love and his passionate pride in her. It is simply an outpouring of his thanksgiving for the gift of her affection. " Let me read for ever that ' Something infinitely beyond.' "

Then comes a letter from Hester herself:

The Love-Letters

V I

Tuesday night, October 15th.

I DID not write to you by the Post of this morning, tho' it was the most natural Time for my indulging my self in my favourite employment, but a gloom had seized my mind and filled it with Ideas not pleasing to me and of which my letter wou'd have partaken.

When you consider the eagerness with which it will have appear'd to you Sunday was expected by me, you will not be at a loss to guess what cause produced such an effect. I cou'd not bear the disappointment of not hearing from you which was to have been the healing blessing of that day, which proved by no means a good day in the sense I used those words to you in my letter of Thursday. A thousand ways your Silence hurt and alarmed me, but I chuse you shou'd judge at present of what my feelings were by contraries and by my expression of the excessive pleasure which I have received in reading yr. Letter to 'night, which is a full compensation for the Past. No joy can equal mine in having reason to believe your happiness depends upon me, because the highest ambition and the fondest wish I can form is to bestow it

upon you, Who are worthy of more than I cou'd bestow, had I all that the world cou'd give. The thought that I am in possession of Your Heart is a pleasure and flattery beyond every other. How amply you repay me for every mark of Preference and Love that I can give You. My Fame, my pride, my Glory is centred in You, and I every day approve my self for the Admiration, Adoration I had rather say, which my mind pays to your virtues and perfections. Can I say You have done wrong to neglect my request and hazard the effects of such a hurrying Journey? my prudence tells me I shou'd reprove You. A more powerful Motive overcomes its suggestions and leaves me incapable of offering anything but thanks for corresponding so much with my wishes of meeting you again. No action that Sir B——. G——'s monument commemorates can be more meritorious or deserve to be more carefully remembered than the defence it gave to you from the violence of the Storm, and for which it shou'd be for ever honour'd, since in saving you from any injury it has not done less service to our England, but much more than all the Unfortunate Merit of the Person whose name it preserves cou'd ever do. My Br. desires his best and affectate. compliments to you and wonders at nothing that

The Love-Letters

your good offices effectuates, knowing what their prevalency is. He rejoices at what you say, and begs to assure you he is always at your commands for any purpose you wish.

A Happy Hope that my first disappointment might be repair'd made me dispatch William to Petsworth, to wait the arrival of the Post, and see if there was no Lucky Letter, and the Lucky Letter came. Yr. Plan of staying Thursday at Mr. Nedham's led me into the dependence of hearing from you Sunday which I think i have not yet explain'd to you. early to-morrow I go to Stowe and now it grows late, for it is after supper that I write, so I wish you every pleasure that I can permit you to enjoy in my absence. I hope I shall be more successfull than I have been in those which I gave to your having a good journey.

Adieu!

She has been filled with apprehension! Who does not know this overwhelming apprehension, and its quite insignificant cause? She has been overcome with depression, sunk in gloom. Surely, surely no common thing with her! She had, in fact, expected a letter from him, and no letter had arrived. She does not spare him. Her real distress of mind has been only too apparent. "A thousand ways your silence hurt and alarmed me."

But I doubt whether any man could really share this state of mind. It takes a woman—and a woman in love—to be so unduly moved; and to express her disappointment in words which must have seemed to the receiver so disproportionate in their abandonment. Happily, before she wrote, the expected letter had arrived! But Pitt must have smiled, had he not been too much in love! As it was, perhaps he only sighed over the unfathomable mind of woman!

His next letter follows:

The Love-Letters

V I I

(October)

Wednesday, 16th, 1754

I F sentiments that filled my every Thought, and constituted every wish of my soul, can, without contradiction, receive continual increase, mine for adorable Lady Hester Grenville multiply by millions every hour. to tell you that a Heart all your own grows more so, may not be Logick, but I am sure it is truth; I am sure it is Love. the most endearing attentions with which you honour and bless me, diffuse a sweetness through my Soul that Words can't paint; not your own happy Power of speaking directly from the Heart, and to it. what enchantment in all you write! I run my eager Eyes over your Letters, and I am struck at once with every charm that ever graced and endeared the happy invention of writing. I see them, I feel them all; and still when I read again, how soon do I find with transport that every Thing was but a Part of the beauties of such a Pen? your sweet care of me in the Storm is invaluable; how must I prize a fear for me from a Heart so little acquainted with it? i long even to visit the quiet shelter of Ribery, where your dear Thoughts had placed me, with all the devotion of a pious Pilgrim towards a tute-

lary Saint that had saved Him. that very Friday night I was passing here, more painfully than in any Tempest, dying with impatience for a Post that woud not go, to bear to my adorable Lady Hester Grenville some of those tenderest, unalterable assurances which her noble goodness and generous feeling Heart deigns to give a value to; which mine ever dictates, and, at this Instant, melts into tears of Joy and Gratitude, while I repeat her own loved words; and pour forth with her kind permission, increasing effusions of veneration, Love and Adoration; sensations too delicious for any but Her to inspire; how far above the Power of Mortal to deserve? and yet the blissful Lot of one among the least deserving. This will not reach your dear Hand till Sunday, for tho' it gos to-night, it will miss Thursday's Post out of London. my letter of Monday last is directed to Wotton and will arrive there Friday; that by Wednesday's Post you have with most endearing attention provided for the care of. my Heart and Soul travel with this to Stow; let me think your eyes will pass over these lines with Pleasure, with joy; it is your own charming word; and I must dare to repeat it. how often do I read and kiss the word you say you love to repeat, because I love to read it? tell it me for ever, and

The Love-Letters

let me thus be with you, in spite of cruel Distance, with fondness, looking on your charms with my mind, and folding them with transport in my Heart. how can I talk to any Thing but You? I feel most gratefully and affectionately, how much I owe the dear Family, Stow and Wotton now conven'd together. they will, I believe, take my word; I am sure They will yours, when you tell Them I am truly theirs. Mrs. Grenville's strange liberties are too obliging; all she dos and the flattering attentions she is pleased to honour me with, are so much in a manner her own, that my Paper might again fail, if I begin the chapter of my grateful and affectionate acknowledgements. The Governor's Lodgings I have taken. happily for me I found them in the Square, where I am. with what joy shall I embrace Him ? he is yours, and not only so, thank Heaven, he is mine. your delicacy about your visit to Stow was perfectly well judged, and not by any means an indifferent matter. it belongs to you alone to discern and pursue what is correctly right, in all the fine degrees and delicate shadings. you leave nothing but to applaud and admire. I find no paper large enough for a Heart that you permit to be yours. how full of words is happiness, and yet how far beyond the Power of Them!

resting to my Glory as to my happiness, and
my soul upon this infinitely endearing
of confidence and sweetest pledge of
wish to live for? and all this generous
bion, which only yourself could feel, could
A charming language, which only you
ind? those Banks on the Pond you so
ly remember, to me are every way delightful
how do I love them for your dear
ce there one morning, and for your kind
from them another? I live on the hope
on having cause to find them more and
delightful, on the first, most endearing
ration. my journey, you do me the honour
were after was safe; my business of

various sorts, have been prosperous; for, I found
means yesterday to make many of them short,
as well as to dispatch many, the day being surely
one of the longest of the whole year. I have
disposed things for finishing all that remain
to morrow, and hope, God willing, to be at
New Friday, and to look at you once more,
and a million ~~Sunday morning~~, if not Satur-
day night. every way it is good, that helps me
to dispatch. in all the more common business,
I think of you, and double my diligence, to
return where you are and see and hear you the sooner.
the more interesting, I think of you, that I have
the glory to be yours, and the happy, happy per-
-mission to call you mine, and am animated
by the thought to discharge any part I have

to sustain, and to aspire to be less unworthy of you.
Now still holds me in most sensible solicitude.
But I would fain not augur any thing gloomy:
Can Friendship, which I have receiv'd so much
from, that I might almost hope for every thing,
fail me, when Love and you, whose I had nothing
to pretend, have consented to give me happiness?
yes, I already fear it may; nay, feel, that, perhaps,
thought, when I think what your establishment
calls for. I am then, I am not but be,
in infinite disquietudes for now. in this pain-
ful Interval that lies between, I shall, I do
now press your sweet letter to my Heart, run over
every word, kiss every letter of it with transports
of Love and gratitude, blessing the noble pitying
Heart that dictated and the dear Hand that
wrote it. ever, ever devotedly yours

How infinite are my obligations to women? I venture
to send no compliments she is less a knowledge meant.

He writes from Bath, in answer to her own letter about his journey. It is a charming letter, and must have given untold joy to his "adorable Lady Hester," when he tells her that a heart "all yours can grow more so may not be logick, but I am sure it is truth, I am sure it is Love." And, again, how charming! . . . "My heart and soul travel with this to Stow (He always spells it 'Stow,' His lady adds an 'e'); let me think your eyes will pass over these lines with pleasure, with joy . . . I find no paper large enough for a Heart that you permit to be yours. . . . How full of words is happiness, and yet how far beyond the Power of them." . . .

And there are those who still think that Pitt was stilted and theatrical in his Love-Letters! Anyhow, there is no woman living who would not have been thrilled by this one.

Lady Hester writes the next letter:

The Love-Letters

V I I I

Stowe, Thursday morn. Oct. 17.

IF it cou'd be that the tender feelings of my Heart had given a character to your words which exceeded the force of what they meant to convey, how unfortunate a correspondent shou'd I prove, and how different wou'd the effect of my writing be from what I wou'd propose and wou'd believe is the case! Yet why shou'd I make that reflection, when it is your own choice that gives me a right to be thus employed and that the temptation to yield it to me cou'd be founded only in those sentiments on the truth of which all my happiness now depends? surely this is true. What is more, I don't doubt it, for you have told me a hundred different ways that I am the object of yr. Love and of your most pleasing Views. the admitting a suspicion of the contrary wou'd be offending you, therefore I disclaim the reflection with which I have begun my letter as foreign to my Heart and forced upon me by circumstances which I am ashamed to acknowledge to my self cou'd give me a passing thought like what gave birth to the question I made. Yesterday I came over here according to my intention, and had a

of William Pitt

meeting with the Governor in the Midst of the Noble Town of Buckm. which pass't in the most agreeable manner in the world. I think by his Calculation my letter and Him are likely to arrive much about the same Time, for it is His place to be with you Saturday morning and according to my reckoning the Post from hence comes in the same day. I found here the welcome from my Brother which I expected and every expression of kindness possible. In short, he was consistent with his Letter. He was not at home when I first appear'd, which was early, having exerted himself so much as to be gone to Middleton with Jemmy, where they met my Mr. Grenville, who also set out with Duncan from Wotton at the Time I left it upon the same scheme. They notified the Event to Ld. Jersey in Terms which mark'd the satisfaction they recd. from it. Ld. Temple communicated it to Ld. George just before his departure, and has to-day, by letter, done the same thing to Commodore West, to whom he seems to suppose you may have already writ it. He has employed Him at my request to inform my Aunt Langham. It is my Br.'s opinion, as you may find by the steps he has taken not to have it remain a secret Longer. and I cou'd only subscribe to what he thought

The Love-Letters

right, having no valid Objection against it, and have had the most kind and obliging answer in the world from the Dowager, who in your favour has made an exception to her general rule and approves *without a But*. You see how powerful a charm is contain'd in your name. She presents her best respects to you and shall be honoured in seeing you when and where you please.

How cou'd yesterday bring me half a dozen Letters without one from you, on whose account only a Messenger travell'd Last night from Petsworth Hither? The Storm is not yet over in my mind that attacked you upon Lansdowne and I think the consequences still to be Apprehended. Shou'd I repress my Impatience and with a Philosophical Indifference quietly wait to the Latest day to be inform'd of what I can never hear soon enough for my pleasure or often enough? It wou'd be in vain to propose it. Too rare a portion of my happiness is staked upon the Information I am to receive. I am angry you have not thought my Imagination wou'd supply me with every means of having yr. Letter by the quickest way and that you have not writ to me in the persuasion of it. If you have writ to me Tuesday, I shall get it to-night. If not, scarce before Saturday, for my

of William Pitt

Br. and Sister come to-morrow so their packets won't arrive sooner and in full confidence of hearing from you before That, my orders have not been extended beyond to-day. I am not very unreasonable, am I? If I am, forgive me, for the Cause, which is being devoted to you by an unalterable Affection. I think of leaving this place Wednesday at farthest to return to Wotten.

The Love-Letters

It is a strange, but a well-known truth that a woman in love is only too apt to be her own torturer. In this letter, written from Stowe on October 17th, Lady Hester at once strikes a note of alarm. Curious that one whose natural temper seems to have been so calm and equable should have been so agitated at her first experience of the ways of love with the human heart. She is afraid lest she shall have read into Mr. Pitt's words more than they really meant! She can really doubt . . . even now! It is extremely difficult for a woman ever to believe that a man loves her as much as he says he does. This is not so generally understood as it should be. She wants reassuring, over and over again. I do not hesitate to say this as a general truth. There is an innate diffidence in most women which makes them slow to believe what they would give their souls to believe! It probably has its origin in a kind of pride, a holding back, an unwillingness to give too soon. But there it is. She reads his letters over again; she recalls his many whispered words of unmistakable admiration. . . . Then . . . she demurely disclaims "the reflection with which I began my

of William Pitt

letter." And yet again she has not heard from him! And here her anxiety carries her somewhat further than the occasion warrants.

"I am angry," she says (Angry! with Mr. Pitt! !), "you have not thought my imagination would supply me with every means of having your letter by the quickest way." It says volumes for his love and for his patience that this strong expression did not call forth at least a little gentle irony from him!

"I am not very unreasonable, am I?" she naively asks. To which the answer must surely have been that she was. For, do as he would, the vagaries of the post were not under Pitt's control.

All her Brothers have written to her by now, with the same delighted approval of her engagement. Even "Aunt Langham" approves "without a But."

From Mr. Pitt, Bath, October 19th:

The Love-Letters

I X

(October)

Bath, 19th. 1754.

THE thought that my ever amiable and most ador'd Lady Hester Grenville was seized with gloom of mind, hurt and alarm'd for worthless me, is almost too much for me. what a multitude of sentiments rise all together in my Heart? I am most deeply touched, wounded to the very soul, with the tender and delicate relation of the situation of a noble, feeling mind during those two whole unpropitious days: and yet grieved and afflicted, as indeed my dearest Life, I most painfully am, there still mixes itself a certain sweetness in the reflection, that it were disengenuous not to own. but however flattering the cause of your Pain is, dear to my soul as must be every tender mark of the account your Heart deigns to make of me, I can never purchase even those most endearing and touching marks of a heavenlike Goodness, without feeling regrets of a sort too embittering for all Sense of Delight, when one Pain of your generous, amiable mind is to be the Price of them. has then that preference and Love, which you so nobly bestow and so tenderly confess, already cost you so many uneasy

hours? how can I either bear to remember it or wish to forget it? for the present let me dwell with transports of delicious gratitude and most ardent, blissful Love, on the charming contraries, by which you chuse to tell me your pass't sensations: what Guardian angel of mine can have so blinded you and pour'd into your noble Heart a tender delusion so infinitely flattering to my glory, and partial to my Happiness, as to draw from you so sweet an excess of everything, that can exalt and bless me above the lot of mortals? the bliss your letter gives me, I shall have your dear permission to enjoy at this distance from you. it is a bliss but one degree from that of seeing you, looking at your lov'd charms, hearing your voice, catching your every word, and gathering a thousand ways, a thousand graces and delights that accompany everything you do and everything you say. but in the happiness of whoever loves like me, how vast an interval, how immense a distance, is this one degree? those wishes, incessant, most ardent wishes, of meeting again, (which you bless me by saying correspond to your own) are the only wishes your unexampled, angel-like goodness has left me to form: except my wish to Heaven, that my subject, with or without a fault of mine, may never cause one Pain

The Love-Letters

of Mind to Her, who has tender compassion enough to make the felicity of Him she alone could make miserable. our dear Harry arrived this morning; what delight to see Him! he is what you know Him; he came from you. He saw you happy. What was I, to embrace Him, to thank Him, to love Him, to talk of You to Him, and to hear of You from Him. Heaven preserve and bless You!

Pitt's letter seems to me quite wonderful in its understanding and gentleness. Allowing for its eighteenth-century modes of expression, there is yet in it something of Love's true vision, of that perfect sympathy which only a great love can ever give. He has received the letter telling him of her "gloom of mind," and he is touched to the heart. But touched and gratified at the same time. Touched and troubled on her account; but infinitely flattered on his own. To think that anyone so dear, so admired as she could suffer so for him!

His letter is really charming. It shows a keenly sensitive intuition. There is no mistaking the real joy the very sight of her handwriting is to him.

Mr. Pitt is utterly, almost terribly, in love with her. Even of her brother he writes: "What delight to see him; he came from you. He saw you happy. What was I, to embrace Him, to thank Him, to love Him, to talk of You to Him, and to hear of you from Him." . . . And how much less all this than the Beloved herself. And what a compliment to his adored Lady Hester Grenville, from the greatest man of his time!

The next letter is Lady Hester's:

The Love-Letters

x

Stowe, Sunday, Oct. 20th.

By my account, you will have receiv'd two packets from me to-day, and perhaps you will have wondered at the vivacity with which all my thoughts are directed to you. Yet if you consider how powerful the principle is that governs all my sentiments you will not want a reason, and an agreeable one too, I flatter myself, for addressing them to you purely as they flow. If my mind had less sensibility upon the article on which all my happiness is founded I shou'd not be worthy of what I enjoy, nor cou'd I feel it in the supreme degree I do. God knows what words I put together to express the pleasure and Satisfaction I had received from yr. letter when I writ to you in that hurry Friday morning, but I contented myself with knowing that, however confused my expressions might be, they wou'd be markt by the feeling which had prompted them, and which wou'd secure them a favourable reception. I live still upon your letter of the 14th which I rec'd by my Petsworth Mercury, but I hope to-day for a fresh supply of happiness by having an account of you correspondent to my wishes.

of William Pitt

I have at last calmed my mind to the Irregularity of the Post, because I see it's what I am to expect. Yr. letter to Jemmy writ a day earlier than mine arrived here only Friday. He speaks for himself in an answer to you to-day, so I shall not say anything for Him, because it wou'd fall very short of what i'm sure he means to express from the pleasure I saw it gave Him. We have had very delightful weather, which I have made use of in the most delightful manner to myself by walking with my Brothers and talking with them upon my most favourite Topicks. I have not rid, my fame and honour being sufficiently established, but I did not neglect it at Wotton, where every step furnish'd me with the dearest recollections. my Bro. and Sister G. return thither to-morrow, and I propose following them Wednesday, at latest. They are both very well and extremely obliged by yr. remembrances of the young Christian. Yr. affectionate compliments are return'd in the sincerest Manner. We have been a large Party as far as dinner every day, Jemmy's hunt having bestow'd that Advantage upon us, but I have no means of distinguishing them further than the belonging to That. Hamilton and Smith are with us. They came from the great scene of pleasure where whatever may delight

The Love-Letters

is still packt together. THE BRAVE has now fix't his residence with the fair, that it may not be in the Power of winds or Storms to destroy the charming regularity that has been so long prevailing in their amusements. The Hood is gone to Miss W——. The Cloak, by our friend's account is quite thrown away. I Long to know the success of my Br.'s Journey, because it will be to the Eternal disgrace of deliberation and consultation if it has not proved of the Most prosperous kind. I place you wandering about the hills of Bath and taking the Advantage of this glorious day for the sake of Health and Pleasure. Will you give my love to Him and receive to yourself whatever share you wish. Constant Compts. from hence. Adieu.

This letter calls for very little comment. She has at last calmed her mind to the irregularity of the Post, "because I see it's what I am to expect."

She seems, in fact, to have settled down quite normally. What a relief it must have been to Mr. Pitt! She is passing her time, in the intervals of writing to him, very pleasantly with her Brothers. They have, in fact, been a large and merry party, with "Jemmy's Hunt" to Dinner every day. Her reference to the Cloak and Hood is not, at this date, to be understood. It must refer to some family joke which Pitt could share.

"The Heart that loveth is much more where it loveth than where it liveth," says Plato. "I place you wandering about the hills of Bath, and taking Advantage of this glorious day for the sake of Health and Pleasure."

Mr. Pitt next writes, from Bath, on Sunday, October 20th:

The Love-Letters

X I

(October)

Bath, Sunday, 20. 1754

CAN it be that I need assure the dear, dear Object of my Love and of my most and only pleasing views, that the tender feelings of her Heart, with all its sensibility and delicacy cannot give a character to my words so much as equal to the force of what they mean to convey? They have meant and must ever mean, while meaning holds a place in this devoted Heart, that I love Lady Hester Grenville; a name that implies a composition formed to inspire every sort of sentiment that goes to constitute that word Love, when you are the object of it. I esteem to veneration, I admire and love to adoration itself. say then, my Sweetest Life, what are those misfortunate *Circumstances*, such enemies to your pass't repose, and such powerfull Disturbers, by the repetition of them, even of my present happiness, which, but for that wounding and afflicting thought, the rest of your sweet letter woud fill my soul with? The gloom you felt has pass't too deeply into my mind: I know your tender goodness woud be sorry to make me feel something I feel now. the question my dearest Lady Hester puts to

of William Pitt

herself, is, I know, to the highest degree flatteringly, because tenderly, injurious to me; but it clouds my mind and alarms my Peace, with a thousand painfull doubts and suspicions of my own behaviour to you, which wound my happiness in the same degree that I wish to Heaven to make yours. The word you use is a large one. may it not imply more than the non-arrival of a Letter you were so good to expect with an impatience delightfull to me, but which it is now known was out of my power to send? can I have been wrong to you? I implore of you to tell me in what? that I may correct and atone the crime, if it has been in my manner or behaviour, or (what i more dread) if in my nature; tell me where it lies, that I may despise and hate myself, as much as I venerate and love you.

I cannot bear the thought of your uneasiness, tho' pass't. it is present to me, who have been the guiltless or the *guilty* cause of it. woud you have recurred to it a second time unless you intended to make me think? if that was in your intention never was you better obey'd; nor ever will you be less so by the man who wishes to live no longer than you are happy. I said once to you that you coud end my being when you pleased. 'twas not a lover's exaggeration; be you unhappy and I soon shou'd cease to be,

The Love-Letters

not only my happiness, my existence depends upon the most amiable of women: she is too, the best, and to my unspeakable felicity the most generous and compassionate. will she forgive me? I know she will, if I entreat Her upon my knees not to distrust the Passion she has rooted in my soul. It is all I can find within myself to be satisfied with: I find your dear Image there as Heaven has framed it: virtue, in your shape, how lovely! I have dwelled too long on the first part of your letter, to say anything to the rest of it without losing the Post. but t'is a *healing blessing*, a balm my Heart too much wanted. it comes like that evening Sun in Milton, after clouds, *with farewell sweet*, as he calls it, to cheer drooping Nature. The Flocks revive, while Hill and valley smile. I told you truth when I said to me you turn'd Poetry to Prose, that is to reality. the Sun is not more essentially necessary to cheer and support the System it informs, than the partial approbation and tender Preference of my adorable Lady Hester Grenville is to the happiness and Being of Him who is ever Her's or nothing. your Dear Brother dined with me. think if we wanted conversation.

His letter of this date (Sunday, October 20th) is a charming reassurance that the tender feelings of Her heart . . . "cannot give a character to my words so much as equal to the form of what they mean to convey. . . . They have meant and they must ever mean, while meaning holds a plan in this devoted Heart, that I love Lady Hester Grenville." . . . "My sweetest Life!" . . . Again one is touched by the gentleness which love gives to this master of delicate irony. There is no suspicion of a smile at her fears; the letter is as sincere and ingenuous as that of any—the simplest—lover.

But more than one of her letters has distressed him. He owns that to her at last; he is stabbed by the fear that she may even mean more than she expressly says. "The word you use is a large one" ("I am angry!").

But he, at once, brings his philosophy to bear upon his apprehensions. "May it not imply more than the non-arrival of a Letter you were so good as to expect with an impatience delightful to me, but which it is now known was out of my power to send."

The Love-Letters

Still, at the back of his mind, there is a vague uneasiness. "Can I have been wrong to you? I implore you to tell me. . . . if it has been in my manner or behaviour, or (what I more dread) if in my nature, tell me where it lies." . . .

Whether reasonable or unreasonable, he takes her apprehensions very seriously. Or lets it appear to her that he does. With Mr. Pitt one cannot be quite sure which.

"I said once to you that you cou'd end my being when you pleased, t'was not a lover's exaggeration. be you unhappy, and I shou'd soon cease to be." Well, well. . . . But how about England? What would the House have said? And the same man knew quite well his power, his value to the State he served. "I know that I can save my country and that no one else can!" . . . It is almost terrible to reflect on the power of woman over man's heart in all ages,—even of a Lady Hester—even over a Mr. Pitt.

From Lady Hester comes the next letter:

of William Pitt

X I I

October 18th. 1754.

Friday, noon.

THE power of writing to you to-day is a peculiar happiness to me, because it corresponds with my wishes of speaking the transports of my Heart in finding my dearest Hopes so answer'd as they were by your letter of yesterday. But what augments the pleasure of it is the being able so soon to tell you that from the delightfull moment that my Eyes run over yr. Letter, I was in disgrace with my self for having permitted my Pen to trace the Image of a Thought that, tho' unapproved, spoke a feeling not pardonable but as it was owing to an irresistible depression from having lost the Infinite Joy I had proposed to myself, wednesday in reading sentiments which are the source of every pleasure I can know.

Perhaps you cannot Comprehend my having given way to such a weakness; but if you don't, it is that I can give no idea of the delicate and tender feeling which belongs to a Heart that is filled with you. you cannot conceive what my vanity is from the commendations you bestow upon me! How is it possible you shou'd, since you never can have known the flattery of re-

The Love-Letters

ceiving applause from any-one superior to yourself, who have the Superiority over all.

Mrs. Sparry is come with a cruel summons for these few words that have not half conveyed what I would say . . . but I must suppress the rest that I may not lose the Advantage of having this arrive that you may dwell as little time as possible upon my Letter of Yesterday, and know that I am now the happiest person that can exist divided from you. A hundred hundred affecte. complts. attend you from all here. this travels to London by the Stage.

In this, the lady's next letter, all is well. The Post has more than fulfilled her expectations. She has had A Letter. The whole world is full of light. She cannot imagine that she had ever felt depressed. "Angry" is out of the question. She takes it all back. Forgets it. It never was. Let the sun shine or cease to shine, what matter? That seems, indeed, to be the lady's state of mind, whether admirable or not. Who can blame her?

Not ours the glory to receive such letters; how do we know what it must have been to wait—and wait—for them? Secretly, I think, she was by now, a little ashamed of her weakness. After all, Lady Hester Grenville was not a child. She does not expect him to understand. How should he? "I can give no idea of the delicate and tender feeling of a Heart that is filled with You. You cannot conceive what my vanity is from the commendations you bestow upon me! How is it possible you shou'd, since you never can have known the flattery of receiving applause from anyone superior to yourself who have the superiority over all." . . .

"I am now the happiest person that can exist divided from you." . . . No wonder he was touched!

Mr. Pitt next writes:

The Love-Letters

XIII

(October)

Bath, Monday, 21st. 1754.

I MEANT to have given to-night to the sweet part of your letter of Thursday and to have soothed my mind with that, and that only: I have now before my eyes, in my Heart's Heart, your delightfull letter of Friday. indulge, my loveliest Lady Hester, indulge yourself and bless me, with your favourite employment of writing to me. how shall I adore you enough for the sweetest of short letters, that bears in every word the delightfull character of a Heart quite happy. cruel Mrs. Sparry, or rather cruel necessity which broke that enchanting stream of joy and tenderness that flows through every line. the angel ended—why must she end so soon? but she has left her own happy, tender, delightfull feelings so warm and lively in my envied and blissfull Heart, that the dear Powers of that too short letter still speak nothing but felicity to my Thoughts. t'was infinite Goodness, t'was Tenderness and Delicacy itself, t'was you my sweetest Life, to think you would not leave me long under the impressions of Thursday. my yesterday will I fear have reached you and given you pain. I was too gloomy per-

haps in my turn: unpardonable, if my letter has disquieted you. but you know I was wounded, and I know you have forgiven me. I can now find a place in my mind for nothing but the delightfull Thought that you are happy and could read all night those dear lines, where a Heart at ease, delicate and tender as your own, has spread over every word the soft and smiling colours of Confidence, Love and Joy. I ought to ask where you could find the sentiments which you have let into your Heart? thank Heaven they are there, and woud to Heaven I cou'd merit them! But where can you find, I must repeat it, a Power of Language which no-one has shown you the way to? do propriety or elegance Delicacy or Force most follow that charming, matchless Pen? may that Charm that so transcends and endears them all, ever characterize the letters you honour and bless me with! may the dear delusion of your Heart ever secure to me the felicity your partial Idea has bestowed upon me! how ill does the word Superiority, apply'd to me or to any ten times me, fit the lips of Lady Hester Grenville! the tender warmth of your feeling, loving Heart has almost sweetly robbed me of the only superiority I gave myself: that of loving you more than you could love. if you dispute this super-

The Love-Letters

iority, I can, I believe, forgive you: if you cou'd obtain it, I am sure I never shou'd forgive myself.

Write soon. Adieu, my sweetest Life.

P.S.

A thousand affectionate compliments attend Mr. and Mrs. Grenville. Mr. Nuthall will have been at Wotton, I trust, to receive Mr. Grenville's orders. delightfull thought! I have writ this night to my poor sister Ann, she is well enough to return to England this winter. whenever your excessive goodness will honour her with a letter it will be a comfort to Her. if you please to commit it to me, I will forward it to Her and bless you a million of times.

What a lovely letter, this, to his "loveliest Lady Hester!" Surely a letter which would have been dear to the heart of any woman. "How shall I adore you enough for the shortest of short letters?" . . . She is happy again. That is enough for him—for her last letter "bears in every word the delightful character of a Heart quite happy." There is only one little note of complaint—in itself of a subtle and endearing flattery.

"The Angel ended. Why must she end so soon?" . . . His relief at her too short, but infinitely happy, letter is evident and sincere. The only superiority he will allow himself is that of "loving you more than you could love."

He, rather diffidently, asks her to write to his sister, Ann, a letter which he may forward. He had some wistful hope of a great friendship between these two.

The lady writes the next letter:

The Love-Letters

XIV

Stowe, Tuesday, Oct. 22nd.

It is by sweetest experience that I know what you protest in yr. last letter, however contrary to Logical rules, may be true. But then it belongs but to one Master to teach one to comprehend that Doctrine. I would make my acknowledgements for having received so great an advantage and can think of no better way than by giving my full assent to it. I felt its full force when I read your sentiments on Sunday. I seek for some former instances of happiness that by the comparison I might give a better idea of my own felicity, but my recollection presents me with nothing that can answer my desire, but leaves me in return that delightful Thought that as I can find no example that equals my purpose, my happiness is unequalled.

It is so indeed. If I consider it in the Light of belonging to a man whose choice reflects the highest Honour, whose amiable Talents and whose noble mind surpasses all, am I not and ought I not to be the happiest of creatures? When I see the joy derived from it to my own dear family and friends is not my happiness endeared to me by so important a circumstance?

of William Pitt

But, above all, the sentiments of my Heart adds a degree to it that can only be felt and not expressed. Is it possible for me to be longer a stranger to fear, sensible as I am to that passion which must for ever produce it and which consecrates it to me now as meritorious. Cou'd the Pilgrim have met his saint at the place so kindly remembered by Him, the Worshipper wou'd have been mistaken for the Person Adored. You flatter me that I write expressively what I feel. If you cou'd but know how poorly to myself my words seem to describe my sentiments you wou'd be a better Judge of the infinite pleasure I receive from that commendation. Ought not you to be angry if I cou'd quit the Topick without telling you what your own Letters deserve. That is the only way of praising what I wou'd praise to the highest. Jemmy was charmed with the Letter recd. Sunday and so was all the Brotherhood who did not seem to believe you less happy than when you last wrote. That was another Joy to me, too. Every way you are the Author of it to me. All visitants receive a notification from my Br. Temple which speaks his vanity upon the subject. L. Dalkeith was here yesterday and had information given Her which will be extended to many quarters of this Island. In the morning I went

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with L. Temple to Lillingston and she told my news. Think with what pleasure I hear what is said upon the occasion since what must be taken for flattery if any but you were the object of it, I can tell myself is but truth. Have you done anything by the good people at Wickham? if you have not, I wish you wou'd say that at my desire you informed them from me. Our Wotton friend returned home yesterday. to-morrow I propose going back to them, the Monday after I shall bend my course toward London, so that the Letter I am to receive from you, by the Post of to-morrowse'nnight must be addresst to Argyle Buildings. I go earlier than would be necessary from any other reason than that I must give two or three mornings to L. Blandford and to North End upon my first arrival. The first I am sure you will think deserving of every mark of my regard from the manner in which she has expressed herself upon my present situation, if she was not already entitled by her former friendship. I want to know whether I may rejoice in the continuance of this uncommon fine weather, for I am not sure it is not too hot for the waters. Don't precipitate your return. The request I make is the greatest proof of my affection. My Br. I am sure will applaud the preference I give to my present correspondent and

of William Pitt

receive from you an account of me with more pleasure than from myself. t's not that I am quite without an intention of writing to Him but this morning I am to drive L. Temple in the chaise, which I would not neglect, and I expect my summons every Instant. you know the Devotion of yr. friends here, and can guess how much is to be included in the word compts. from them.

I have some thoughts of making Stoke my Inn in my way to London, but I shall determine it upon deliberation. I am call'd. How many thanks I pay you for having persuaded me that you receive yr. happiness from me.

Adieu!

The Love-Letters

Again she writes in such radiant happiness that she "seeks for some former instances of happiness that by the comparison I might gain a better idea of my own felicity . . . but my happiness is unequalled."

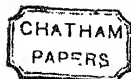
She has been reflecting on his greatness, his splendour, and on the glory of belonging heart and soul to such a man. And the joy of her own family was another joy to her, as was also the fact that "The Brotherhood" did not seem to believe him "less happy than when he last wrote." That, she says naively, "was another joy to me, too. Every way you are the Author of it to me."

The letter is, further, tinged with a note of delightful expectancy. And I more than half suspect that its radiancy is enhanced by the thought that "the Monday after I shall bend my course towards London." . . . which would bring them nearer to meeting once again.

But she implores him not to hasten his return. He is at Bath for his health—and that matters most of all. "The request I make is the strongest proof of my affection."

The next letter is from Pitt:

Oct 9. 1771 Wednesday Night



As I suppose I've attended my earnest wishes this Letter will find you safely
arrived at Bath with the same Health & above all with the same Satisfaction
with which you left this Place. It has been a melancholly Day, & a
gloomy Evening, without a bright Star to enliven it. The Storms have
given me a thousand fears not for Rotton or any part of its Contents
but for poor travellers whose Equipages or more exclude such
driving Winds & rain. As it was not for the danger they might
incure from it, I should easily pardon its effects upon the Beauty
of the scene since no Light could give it the Merit it has. Let
all my happiness is to be found ^{at present} in my self, which the Esteem



approbation, & which will make every thing that bears it
current with me. The Inland Letter I recd this evening & am
charmed to have you read my own sentiments traced by a
hand. Dearest to me now than ever. It belongs but to one
person to inspire so universal a strike upon the same
subject. You will find by Henry's, Gemmy is returned & that
to morrow they intend being at Home. I have writ a Letter
which I propose should meet Gemmy at Hillsbury & have
taken care to assure him B. G.'s anxious Impatience to know
where you wd. address y^r self to him & that I was to have

by the wise so great an advantage, I am far at this time from
thinking the greatest. How shall I carry on the time till Sunday if I am
in your situation after a journey that must I am afraid have
been unpleasant in more circumstances than I could wish. What
is worse even that good day will bring me information very
short of my wishes. It must be Wednesday before I can learn
that you are settled safely in your own Lodgings. I have been
the greater part of the day in conversation with my brother
upon Subjects useful & interesting to my favourite Society. The
evening had as it was I walked with him to the bridge & New
Plantation which had a mark upon them that secured my

entrusted with a letter from you to him but that as you was
to go to day I was obliged to burn it & give no encouragement
to a scheme that was to deprive me of your company. It is true
that I remembered it but I would not mention it. I write to
night, tho its late that my br may carry the letter with him
to Morris to Peterburg. Most Affec^t Compl^t attend you from
him & my sister. something infinitely beyond from my self

Adieu

of William Pitt

x v

(October)

Bath, Wednesday, 23rd. 1754.

How hard it is that I must purchase the Delight of receiving letters from you by the loss of seeing and hearing you! but for these two cruel circumstances such a Charming Commerce would be perfect happiness. if I wonder at anything in your letters that can stamp a Character on them transcending whatever has been writ, it is the dear Delusion that has touched your Heart and, to my unexampled Felicity, called forth so rich a Treasure of the sweetest Compassion and tenderest sensibility. The Post of this morning brought me your dear present of Sunday. that of Friday was brought me sooner than ordinary, by some favouring and pitying Fortune, that saw all that my Heavenly Lady Hester felt, when she put those sweet words together, tenderly sent, on the wings of Pity and Love, to a Heart that wanted such a celestial balm. my Gloom and my Transports, both of the same tender Family, will have reach'd you, the first, I flatter (myself?) you can pardon, the second receive with plasure, for the sake of that Parent who gave them birth. when I look at the dates of our

The Love-Letters

letters, what an age it is, even by the strictest Chronology, since my eyes ceased to see yours. we are now arrived at ye 23rd. and I learn from our dear Harry that you talked of being in London about the first days of November. I propose to be there ye 3rd. of that month. may I tell myself that that blessed Day will give you to my longing eyes, and lay me at your loved feet? may I tell myself your own tender Heart bears some proportion to the painfull, pleasing Impatience of mine? suppose your transported, happy Servant there, and see how unreasonable is Love: I can be there only to tell you of further Impatience. implore your goodness to supplicate your tenderness in favour of a wish that is to crown all the wishes of a soul full of nothing but you. I trust Mr. Grenville's orders to Mr. Nuthall will be ready by that time to be executed. The House, such as it is, will then be ready to receive you; and the Heart where you already inhabit, and command, will know no peace, till you have own'd it to the world for your own, by accepting the hand your tender compassion has not disdain'd. I understand from your Brother H. that Ld. Temple had a thought of Stow for the Place. My Dearest Lady Hester intimated another Idea to me. Lord Temple may have mentioned

of William Pitt

something of his wishes to you, which delicacy may have hindered you from imparting to me. wherever it is to be, every Place that gives you to me, must be for ever sweet; but sweetest that, which causes the least embarassment to my adorable Lady Hester. your own first thought, I, for that dear reason, and for every other, wish the most: the less Preparation, the less spectacle, the less of everything but of your lovely tender Self, is surely best. I shall long, with a peculiar impatience, for a letter, in consequence of a request that most ardently stirs, and most tenderly touches and agitates my impatient Heart. the Governour's journey was a journey of Deliberation, for he arrived safe at Bath the third Day. your kind thoughts, kind every way, in having us there, and in placing me with your dear Brother upon our Hills, in such weather, had figured us just as we have often been. Did they figure us, too, talking of the lovely, loved Object, whose Presence alone can make the most striking ones please? we pass'd this very morning on our Hills, He admiring the scenes, and I, wishing for you to see them; and that I might feed my eyes with nothing but you. when will this letter end? it is time I should think of sparing your dear eyes the trouble of reading my scrawl any longer. I have notify'd

The Love-Letters

my happiness and glory to Hagley. your Cypher is admirable; never was a narrative better pack'd up. how do I wish to supply in Person that irregularity of the Post you have calmed your mind to? I believe I cou'd reach Wotton in three days, with all proper deliberation. a part of the way I am to measure Friday, and that Part, for all the Logicians, is much more than the whole wou'd be. I am to dine at Badminton, on the most obliging invitation, and shall return at Night. Friday, no Post travels towards you; what signifies where I am? once more my Paper admonishes me to have done. think I write for to-night, and Friday too, and think, my sweetest Life when I have writ whole sheets of Paper, I seem to have said but the smallest part of feelings too tender and too deeply rooted for my pen to reach. Adieu. I am ashamed to want room to assure Mr. and Mrs. Grenville of ye truest and most grateful affection.

Pitt's letter (Wednesday, October 23rd) breathes a longing, an overwhelming impatience to see her again. Letters are ceasing to satisfy him—even her letters. "What an age it is, even by the strictest chronology since my eyes ceased to see yours." . . .

She has told him she intends to be in London by November 1st. He proposes to be there by November 3rd, and he asks: "May I tell myself that that blessed day will give you to my longing eyes and lay me at your loved feet?" But he warns her that that satisfaction will only beget a further impatience for the time "that is to crown all the wishes of a soul full of nothing but you." He even discusses where the wedding shall take place. "Wherever it is to be, every Place that gives you to me must be for ever dear; but sweetest that which causes the least embarrassment to my adorable Lady Hester."

She had been right to picture him walking upon the hills. "Your kind thoughts in placing me with your dear Brother upon our Hills, in such weather. had figured us just as we have often been. . . . we pass't this very morning (there), He admiring the scenes, and I wishing for you to see them." . . .

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He compliments her on her handwriting. "Your cypher is admirable. Never was narrative better packed up." On Friday he goes to Badminton. But "Friday no post travels towards you; what signifies where I am?"

The Mr. Nuthall mentioned in this letter was Thomas Nuthall, a confidential Solicitor, employed by Mr. Pitt to prepare his marriage settlements. He was appointed Secretary to the Treasury in 1765, and died very suddenly ten years later, from fright and excitement, at being attacked by a Highwayman on Hounslow Heath.

Lady Hester's letter follows next:

of William Pitt

Wotton, Thursday, Oct. 24th

IF the having asked your pardon a hundred times in my mind for having permitted my pen to propose a question that ought never to have found a place in my thoughts, and being unpardoning towards myself for having been guilty of such a weakness, can be any reparation for the pain I have given you, I have both to plead with the utmost truth. But how shall I make atonement to myself for having disturbed your peace, though but for a moment? It is certain that it is dearer to me than my own, and that mine entirely depends upon it. I have no purpose in Life, no view of happiness, but what takes its rise in the pleasing thought of contributing to yours. How then could I employ words that cou'd carry such cruel consequences? It was an effect that the cause does not justify to myself, and I beg you to receive my most solemn declaration that its foundation was not in anything that proceeded from you. That, were it not for what my folly has made you feel from it, I cou'd smile at it now, and the only reason why I don't explain the whole in this letter to you, is the fear of using words that you

The Love-Letters

might put too strong a construction upon. When we meet, you shall know all, though it will be again taking shame to myself, but everything is to be preferr'd to your attributing it to false reasons. It was not caprice, it was not artifice, both of which I will say I am equally a stranger to, but it was a mind too tenderly affected, and therefore not capable of slighting what deserved to be contemned. If I had not forfeited my right of reproaching you, what shou'd I not say to you for believing it possible that anything in your nature had occasioned my unhappiness. I think it of so noble a stamp, so great and so amiable in its composition, that I shou'dn't esteem it less than a sin to wish the least particle of it alter'd. I look upon it, to borrow words that may best express my sense of it, as some emanation of the All-Beauteous Mind. For yr. behaviour, unless I was disposed to quarrel with elegance, delicacy and Love, I can only admire it and enjoy the charm it diffuses over all you do. With these unfeigned sentiments you will judge how your letter affected me and what a mixture of grief and joy I felt. I will now, however, devote my thoughts to the Last, in full Confidence that every disagreeable Impression will be totally effaced by this Letter, and hoping that little

will have been left for it from the stile which has prevailed in my other letters writ from Stowe. I left that place yesterday and their purpose seem'd to be to quit it for London about the tenth. but very kindly and obligingly declar'd themselves at command for any time they shou'd be summoned. The Person that was to come hither by appointment arriv'd according to order. He received my Br. G's directions and has promised to send a rough draught of the Papers He was to draw by This day sen-night and that if approved they wou'd be finish'd in less than a week after. I found a Letter here yesterday from Miss Lyttelton notifying the arrival of the family in Cavendish Square. I am going to notifie myself in return, for I think it wou'd be improper to delay it, and the more from particular circumstances which you know I hold my resolution of going from hence Monday to London, but shall not make Stowe in my way. A Breakfast at Hillingdon will take its place Tuesday morning instead, for I shall take my night's Lodging Monday at Missenden in favour of my saddle Horses.

Has it ever occured to you to recommend having the paper match'd to the blue of the half damask that is to compose the Chairs

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Cushions and the rest of the furniture of your room above stairs, for I think it possible you may not have considered that different shades is not to be chosen if it can with the same care be avoided. I must draw my letter to a conclusion, but must first say that I read with pleasure of yr. dining party, because for my own sake next to myself it is the company I most wish for you. My love attends Him, and I believe I am not so much my Own as I am yours.

She is overcome with remorse for having caused him the unhappiness,—the heart searching,—of which he told her in his letter of the 20th. She cannot say enough of her love for and her faith in him. “I have no purpose in life, no view of happiness, but what takes its rise in the pleasing thought of contributing to yours.”

Always, to me, her letters are less than his. They lack, of course, his strange, indefinable charm, which no eighteenth-century conventions can altogether extinguish. But they lack also something of his passion, his entire abandonment. Perhaps that is only to say that he was a man, and she was a woman.

She gives him her most solemn declaration that the foundation of her misgivings “was not in anything that proceeded from you.” Whatever had distressed her—and we shall never know exactly what it was—that, at least, remains their secret—she cannot tell him in a letter. “When we meet you shall know all.”

In this letter she outstrips all her former protestations of reverence and admiration. He had

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wondered if it were anything in his nature that offended her. She answers that once and for all, in words so strong, so ecstatic that one does not wonder they moved him almost to fear. She thinks his nature so noble, "so great and amiable in its composition that I should esteem it not less than a sin to wish the least particle of it altered. I look upon it as some emanation of the All-beauteous Mind."

Very soon now she sets out for London. The Lyttelton family have already arrived in Cavendish Square: All her own family have obligingly declared themselves in readiness to be summoned to the wedding at any time next month (November).

She advises him to have the paper of his "room above stairs" blue, to match the "half damask of the chairs, cushions and the rest of the furniture." After all, in these things he is a mere man, and so may not have considered that "different shades is not to be chosen if it can with the same care be avoided." Probably Mr. Pitt, so fastidious in dress, was also equally fastidious in his surroundings. One has known men who far outshone women in the arrangement of their rooms, even in such details as the particular shades of colour they chose,—even to the disposal of such trifles as books and flowers! But the Lady Hesters of the world leave very little to chance.

The next letter is also Lady Hester's:

of William Pitt

X V I I

Friday, Oct. 25th. Wotton.

I R E C D. your Dear Letter last night from
Petsworth and as I find no pleasure equal
to that of proving my readiness to comply with
every wish of yours I have writ to your Sister
as you see by the enclosed. I am afraid she will
find no reason to adopt the partial opinion you
have formed of my writing, but I trust much
more to the impressions I know your affection
for me will give Her than to anything I cou'd
say for myself, so I have the easier contented
myself about it. I shall not to-day obey the
flattering desire you express of my writing long
as well as soon, not because I writ long to you
Yesterday, but that I fear as it's an irregular
Post day, that I may make my letter too late,
and lose my favourite point of showing you how
entirely I am governed by that ruling inclination
of doing whatever can contribute to your pleasure.
the most affecate. compts. of your friends
here are all addrest to you in the most particular
Manner. my Br. Gr. don't write to you Himself
because he has nothing to say but what you
already know in all senses of the word. Both
my Sister and Him beg they may trouble you

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with an assurance to Harry that they do intend writing to Him and that the old Proverb is not to be applied with respect to Him "Out of Sight, out of Mind."

I have only to say to you, tho' out of sight, ever present. Pray remember me to Harry. I must bid Adieu.

In this little letter her chief item of interest is that she has written to his sister Ann, as he had desired. She cannot expect that Ann will think as much of her letter as Pitt himself; but she is comforted by the reflection that his affection for her will have given Ann a better impression than anything she could say.

Pitt hoped great things from a friendship between Ann and his adored Lady Hester, but as it turned out they never really liked one another very much.

Lady Hester's first letter is by no means what one would imagine from the way in which Pitt speaks of it in one of his own later letters. It is the chilliest, most formal little epistle. But it must be remembered that Lady Hester had not yet met Ann, and that such letters are notoriously difficult to write.

Then follows a letter from Mr. Pitt:

The Love-Letters

XVIII

(October)

Saturday. 26th. 1754.

I S H O U' D have pass'd but a tedious Day of bad weather yesterday at Badminton, without your dear Letter of Tuesday in my Pocket and in my Heart. We drove about that vast and now magnificent Place, thro' wind and rain: I with that sunshine in my soul which your tender and sweetest goodness to me throws over all my thoughts, and which the charming Present that morning brought me from you had lighted up and cheered my whole being with. your letters are mark'd more and more every day, with the delightfull and transporting character of your happiness; and of your full persuasion of the ardour and devotion of that deep-rooted and most tender Passion, which makes the Sun of my present existence. I reckon my letter of Wednesday last will have reached you at Wotton: this will present itself to my Dearest Life in her Argyle Buildings. shall I then be sure to find the Object of my ever sweetest hope and most ardent expectation when I arrive Saturday, ye 2nd. Novr.? may I tell myself that she will look with joy upon a Being she has made happy, and feel the heavenly

pleasure of bestowing felicity? Yes, I may, I do tell myself this transporting truth, which she has so tenderly told me, in all the Delightfull variety that delicacy of mind and generous sensibility of Heart can alone suggest. how can even your commands not to precipitate my return keep me from flying to your feet? from siezing the dear spot of Earth you tread, as an empire I wou'd not change for that of the World? how shall I describe the insufferable length of this cruel week? let your own tender, pitying, kindest Heart count with me every hour that stands, not moves, between our delightfull meeting. Those weeks of years, so disputed in chronology, I can too well explain. but it will come, I trust in Heaven, that sweet moment will come, when my eyes shall see my adored Lady Hester. Harry, for I love Him enough to call Him so, allows of your messenger, and generously prefers my pleasure to his own. we rid this morning where I saw you so much pleased, Mr. Harrington's Farm; the cascade, the river, the wood, was all delightfull; for I saw you in them all. this morning I have notified my felicity to the good Folks at Wickham, but I have yet had no news of them. I am sure they will truely rejoice, for I know they are truely my friends. I have also notify'd to Sir Richard

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Lyttelton who is arrived but not in Town. I think I can know no joy till I see you, but in your letters.

You cannot say too much for me to Lady Blandford. she has mentioned me with advantage to Her, whose Partiality is for ever essential to my Being. how can I feel too much obliged to Her? she loves you. what a merit to me!

When Pitt wrote this letter he had already been to Badminton. He drove about "that vast—and now magnificent—place," in pouring rain and a driving wind, but he had sunshine in his heart, for did he not carry with him her "dear letter of Tuesday."

She had bidden him not to hasten his return to London, but how can "even her commands keep him from flying to her feet"?

His philosophy is waning. "How shall I describe the insufferable length of this cruel week? Those weeks of years so disputed in chronology, I can too well explain." Is not this the language of every absent lover since Time began?

He had "rid" that morning with Harry to Mr. Harrington's Farm, a place where he had been with her, and where he had seen her so pleased that "everything,—the cascade,—the river,—the wood"—"was delightfull" to him, "for I saw you in them all."

Lady Hester's is the next letter:

The Love-Letters

X I X

Sunday, Wotton. Oct. 27th.

I INTEND now to repay myself for having been obliged the last time I writ to you to confine my Letter to such short bounds that I seemd not to have exprest the smallest part of what I had to say. Yet I Flatter myself it will have carried some mark of the satisfaction that reign'd in my Heart from the repeated confirmation of your partial fondness for me. The return which you know it meets from me must have assur'd you with how much pleasure the lively painting of your sentiments convinces me that I do indeed make you happy by the faithful description of my own. How great is the felicity I enjoy from the sweet persuasion of being placed in your Heart with such flattering Ideas as your fond love bestows upon me! How can you wonder, without being unjust to yourself, or me, at the impression which your matchless merit has made upon me! Is not that merit graced by every charm that ought to engage and have I not reason then to applaud myself as I do for being sensible to it? Never apply the term delusion to the Dear and Just Idea I have form'd of your excellence, and tell

of William Pitt

yourself that whilst Life continues I will never part with them. Judge now if I am not likely to carry on, in one Instance, the Dispute between us of Superiority, and in your own way.

In every other sense in which that word is employ'd it belongs to you, and I have either so much or so little of the Woman in me that it is an opinion I am determin'd never to recede from. I hold my purpose of going to-morrow, and being in Town on Tuesday and I feel a pleasure in being fix'd at a place which gives me the advantage of hearing from you so much sooner, that the concern which always accompanies the parting with my Wotton friends is diminished by it.

You will not imagine I believe that I shall seek to lose your dear Idea in following the diversions of the Town. Your Thoughts may place me in my little Indian room, where I have seen you, and generally they will be right. I must acknowledge myself to L. ch. Ed. who I take for granted will have settled her Winter residence in yr. street by the time of my arrival. But except her and the persons I named to you in one of my Letters I shall reveal myself to no-body. We have had rather stormy weather these last days, but such however that I think will have admitted of your taking your rides

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under the protection of the Hills. Commodore West makes us a visit to-day from Stowe, but when he arriv'd there, and what his future plans are I know not. You have heard certainly the Tragical Event that has happened in the Queensberry family. I suppos'd it of a nature to make the happy tremble from the reflection of the various accidents that might rob them of their felicity, but I find there are doubts whether a Will did not attend this, that can belong to the Unhappy only. Any way it is to be sincerely lamented. Our friends Here propose being in Town the seventh. their most affect. compts. attend you as usual. I am in doubt whether I shall gain anything by sending this letter by the Post of to-day, but i chuse to flatter myself it will continue its road to Bath to-morrow night, and so reach you a day earlier than if I had reserved it for the London Post on Tuesday. I believe you will be satisfied that I was sincere in terming my writing to you my favourite employment. I do indeed Love to repeat the unfeign'd affection with which I am for ever Devoted to you.

Pray tell Dr. Governour my plan of being in Town and that from thence I will write to Him.

Lady Hester writes to "repay herself" for the shortness of her last letter.

She is now quite convinced that she is able to make him happy in her own happiness, and this has made her happier than ever.

She absolutely disdains the idea that it would be possible to over-rate him. "Never apply the term 'Delusion' to the Dear and Just Idea I have formed of your excellence, and tell yourself that whilst Life continues I will never part with it."

She is delighted at the thought of being in London, "fixt at a place which gives me the advantage of hearing from you so much sooner." Then she says a really charming thing. She will not disturb her absorption in her thoughts of him by "seeing the diversions of the Town." She will not even see more people than she can help, until the time has come for them to meet again. She wants to keep as closely to the thought of him as possible,—without distractions.

Later, her letter comments on the "Tragical event that has happened in the Queensberry family." This was the death of Lord Drumlanrig,

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who was killed by the accidental discharge of his own pistol, in their coach, while they were on a journey to London, accompanied by his newly-married wife, Lady Elizabeth, a daughter of the Earl of Hopetoun. She died of consumption a little more than a year afterwards.

The next letter is Mr. Pitt's:

of William Pitt

X X

(October)

Sunday, 27th. 1754.

A SERIES of the most delightfull letters that ever spoke a happy Heart had dispelled every sentiment from my breast but those of the sweetest kind, the felicity of truly and most tenderly loving and (may I utter the word?) that of knowing your tender feelings corresponded to my own. your kind and flattering letter of Thursday would have heal'd any wounds a misunderstanding cou'd have given, and been of Power to recall a mind from Desperation itself to Peace, Confidence and Joy, had not that same tenderness of Heart and Delicacy of Attention that gave the pain, infinitely overpay'd it, whatever it was, with the most exquisite and transporting joys which your dear letters since have given me. it is over: for ever erased out of memory: or, if any vestiges remain, T'is only the sweet recollection how dearly my Peace of mind touches you, and how flattering a value your sensibility and delicacy give to all that comes to you from me. which, my lovely, adored Lady Hester, shall I thank you most for? the Pain you gave me, when I consider the Cause, or the delightfull

The Love-Letters

and too tenderly condescending explanation of it? Ages of suffering cou'd not merit the smallest part of those kind and touching Declarations that you so solemnly and so sweetly make. indeed, my dearest Life, you do too much for me: it is not fit you shou'd carry the Partiality of your Ideas so far: fear mixes itself with my unspeakable Delight, to think how infinitely you over-rate me. I were a thousand times more worthless than I am, if my Heart did not tell me, and still more, if that Heart did not declare to you, that the Thing you have given up your whole Mind and Heart to, is not me: (wou'd to Heaven it was!) but an Idea correspondent to your own matchless excellence, and which ought to be the man that is so blest to call you his. t'is an unaffected fear that mingles itself with my happiness: the tender Delusion cannot last; nor that discernment blind to nothing else, forever shut its eyes in my favour. this my fears and but common modesty suggest, and while I melt with tenderness and gratitude at your partial, loving Heart, I adore and tremble as I read. how sweet is the detail of the furniture of your rooms! how good of you to think of it! my Thoughts, adored Lady Hester, sweet object of my every wish, had been there long before you. can you wonder?

of William Pitt

Mr. Hall has had orders to match the paper and other furniture in colour, and all is promised to be ready the last day of this month. I write this post to your dear Brother Grenville, imploring his kind offices for me everywhere; with Lawyers; at Stow; and above all with you. if the Law's delay will mend its pace in my favour, may I not hope that everything Else may correspond to my wishes, and feel a part of my tender Impatience. if my good Angel in Argyle Buildings shou'd smile upon my prayers I prefer to beg my Dear Lord Temple to be in Town by ye 6th Nov. Wotton proposes to be there about that day. our dear Harry thinks nothing so reasonable as my supplications. judge how I love Him! and how endearing a mark that he dos not hate me! I leave Bath Friday, early. Thursday's post will be the last that can find me here. how little cou'd I bear such an interruption of our intercourse, if it was not to change it for one still so much more sweet! to hear from those loved lips the tender sentiments I have read; and to read them again in a yet more touching and transporting character, in sweetest looks of heartfelt, mutual, blissful love! I cannot close this letter without returning again to your last, and reproaching my lovely Lady Hester with an indignity to

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herself. t'is such for you to disclaim caprice and artifice; Nature must change before you can know either; for if ever Proceeding was stamp't with the most ingenuous and noble frankness (I adore so much) and invariable goodness of Heart, t'is that which I have so delightfully experienced in every word and action of the glorious and perfect Pattern of Womanhood. Adieu.

Pitt also wrote, on the same day (Oct. 27, Sunday).

Her last letters have entirely dispelled the sadness caused by that one luckless letter of vague misgiving and distrust. For "that same tenderness of Heart and Delicacy of Attention that gave the pain infinitely overpay'd it, whatever it was, with the most exquisite and transporting joys which your dear Letters since have given me. It is over; for ever erased out of memory, or, if any vestiges remain, 'tis only the sweet recollection how dearly my peace of mind touches you."

As usual, his letter far surpasses hers in the passionate expression of his love. But he is growing almost fearful of her reverence, her adoration, of him. "The Thing you have given your whole Mind and Heart to is not me: (I wou'd to Heaven it was!) but an idea correspondent to your own matchless excellence, and which ought to be the man that that is so blest to call you his."

Such an ideal love as hers, he fears, can never last. He knows himself, and it fills him with fear to reflect that she must, before long, find out that he is, after all, human; and no god, to be worshipped,

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as she would fain believe. Very gently he utters his warning; "the tender delusion cannot last," he says (not without pathos), "nor that discernment, blind to nothing else, for ever shut its eyes in my favour. This my fears and common modesty suggest. I adore and tremble, as I read."

How many a lover, revered and looked up to by his Mistress, has uttered the selfsame warning—and just as much in vain! A woman must worship something, it seems,—worthy or unworthy. And Mr. Pitt was, possibly, less unworthy than he knew.

He hints at a date for the Wedding (Nov. 6th), but discreetly, not wishing to forestall her own desires. He is the most reasonable, the most chivalrous of lovers.

The next letter is from Lady Hester:

of William Pitt

X X I

Monday, Missenden, Oct. 28th.

IT is perhaps the first time that the being alone at an Inn appeared to be an agreeable thing, but mistress of myself and given up to your dear Idea, it is to me a happy situation. I received yr. Wednesday's Letter last night at Wotton, and one also dated the 19th. To the last I hope my former Letter will have been a complete answer, as likewise to the first part of that which bears the latest date. I will therefore pass to the subject which demands from the most powerful controllment (the acquiescing to your desire) an immediate answer. What shall I do? I fear my answer will not correspond to yr. plan—and yet it is impossible for me to give to your sollicitations an earlier Time than the 15th or 16th. of next month. Don't imagine I ask for reasons to delay your happiness and in yours, my Own. I never cou'd have given my Heart so absolutely with an intention to withhold my Hand. A hundred combining circumstances make it out of my power not to impose that interval between your wishes and my Consent. Lord Temple's Intention when I left Stowe was not to quit it till the 10th, unless

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summon'd my Br. G. being in Town the 7th. only, and I think it wou'd be too late for an earlier summons, if other points cou'd be settled, which certainly they cannot. Mr. Nuthall has writ to excuse Himself from sending the Draught of the Papers at the time appointed. They won't be at Wotton before Sunday, if he keeps his Word. My money must be vested before they can be sign'd after they are perfected, and my Dear Harry and I have settled no account. My own little business will not be finished. Let me repeat that sooner than what I have nam'd it cannot be. Lady Temple mention'd Stowe to me the instant I arrived, but I begg'd I might be excus'd from accepting it, though every mark of grace from my Br. and Her are most flattering to me, and in that Light what I shou'd wish to receive, but in this particular case it was an Honour and a Pleasure that I must forego. My reasons were easily approv'd when I talk'd with my Br. I told Him upon his questioning me what I had nam'd to you. He thought it was a right Idea, but seem'd to like Ealing still better if that conveniently cou'd be. I understand they take up their residence in London the 10th. but you are the only and best Judge of the reasons for or against proposing it. I submit it to you, and provided

of William Pitt

I am not expos'd to the embarrassment of having the Honours done to me by either of the Parties, I am satisfied. The Commodore tells me that Lodgings are fitting up at Chelsea for the reception of Empress and His Brother, and that they are to be establish'd there this week or the next. I cannot with justice to my Brothers omit to say that they have both declar'd themselves depending upon your orders. But you will see it cou'd not be to any purpose to avail yourself of their kind declarations. But if it was not too much trouble, I wish you wou'd by a few lines to each of them Let them know that I have done truly by them. After reading This, plead my Cause with yourself, and remember how dear you have reason to think your Happiness is to me from those expressions which you have allow'd Tenderness alone cou'd Dictate. The same recollection will leave you in no doubt of my Looking upon the day that brings you to me as the best and most pleasing of any I have seen. I will say that I feel I shall expect it with an impatience that will affect every thought. . O! may your Journey be prosperous, free from everything that is disagreeable and secure from any disastrous accident! You see I grow acquainted with fears by what I pray to be averted from you. I hope this Letter will find you safe

The Love-Letters

after your Badmington expedition. Without indulging weak terrors, is not travelling by night an Alarming Circumstance? Pray remember how much I am interested in your care of yourself. I have this morning writ a few words in my sister's letter to the poor unhappy Dutchess. All we can Learn tends to confirm the doubt I hinted to you in my last. You may believe none of us particulariz'd the circumstances of Her affliction, but only condol'd with her that there was any cause for it. I shall not seal my Letter here, but leave it open to add my being arriv'd happily in Argyle Street.

Monday. I am indeed happily arriv'd, but the welcome I found surpass't every other pleasure. It was yrself that recd. me. Your Own Dear Handwriting greeted my first step into my own Argyle residence. How many charms attend my being in it? The uninterrupted contemplation of my own Happiness! The endearing recommendation that Here my impatient eyes will first see you again. The employment I shall find which will all tend to the unquestionable proof of the sincerity of my sentiments. You come, then, Saturday! The most rigid prudence sure will not demand that from any consideration of your Health I shouldn't enjoy

in all its extent the satisfaction of seeing you something earlier than I had flattered myself. I have been taken from my letter to you to give audience to Lady Ch. Edwin, to whom I verified my arrival in consequence of a promise made to my Sister to get all possible information upon the unhappy story of poor Lord Drumlanrigg's death. The circumstances I have learnt from Her make me alter my opinion and think it the effect of a most unlucky chance. I am forced to yield to the necessity of concluding my Letter, having engaged, as I have said, to write to Wotton, and having before me at the time the genteelest, and most obliging Letter possible from your Sister, which I recd. whilst L. Ch. Edwin was with me, and which I feel an infinite impatience to make a proper return to. I shou'd say Abundance of Civilities from Lady Ch., but I must leave them to a better opportunity, which will be the happy day of my seeing you Here, for according to my calculations I cannot write to you again.

Though my paper is full, and that I have no time, I am sorry to say Adieu.

The Love-Letters

This letter finds her on her way to Town. She writes from her Inn at Missenden, where she stayed the night.

Even to stay at an Inn alone seems to her a delightful adventure, absorbed as she is in thoughts of him and in her own happiness. But he must please understand that she cannot possibly be married before the 15th or 16th of next month. Not that she wishes to postpone his happiness, "and in his, her own."

But, for one thing, the complicated business of her Settlements will not be concluded earlier than that. And there are a hundred other reasons. She discusses the most suitable place for the Wedding, and keeps her letter open to be able to inform him of her safe arrival in Town. This she is able to do, later,—and moreover, to her great joy, she is greeted, on arrival, by a letter from him. Best of all, he himself comes on Saturday, and, according to her calculations, she will not have time to write to him again. This is her last letter before their meeting; her last love-letter to him; though, in the best sense, all the letters of her married life were

of William Pitt

quite as much love-letters as those which came before it. For these two were lovers always; they were of that blessed and favoured few who marry and live happily ever after!

The next letter is from Mr. Pitt, at Bath:

The Love-Letters

X X I I

(October)

Bath, Monday, 28th. 1754.

How vast a store of goodness and humanity and of the most endearing tenderness to me, in your sweet bit of paper on Friday! your letter to my poor sister is such a one that it brought tears of gratitude into my eyes when I read it; I am quite ashamed, and at the same time all Pride and Delight, to be employed in transmitting such a flattering Proof of your Partiality and Tenderness to me. the style and manner of it is above all applause; the whole letter is the sweet Representative of my matchless Lady Hester. The Propriety of her just understanding in adapting so exactly the means to an end, (and how generous and Godlike to carry comfort and joy to the drooping Heart of perhaps an almost expiring poor woman!) The Elegance and Nobleness of your manners, the superiority of Dignity in humanly departing from the right of receiving the Offers of Friendship you so generously make; and above all, the kindest, sweetest, angel-like goodness that characterise the sentiments you have given your virtuous and tender Heart to; all these are steep't in the liveliest and most amiable colours

upon every word of that adorable letter. This Post will bring you two Packets from me; one was writ, but cou'd not go, last night. will you be troubled with them both at once? I must send them to you. had I as many Hearts, as many thousands, rather, They would all fly to my sweetest Love; and she suffers me to think that she wou'd shut the door against no one of them. I must return to your Angel goodness in writing the first letter to my sister; your superiority every way, in so noble a condescension of Humanity (and such this truely is) wou'd appear the only Dignity. what a happy lot is mine to call a Heart which every virtue has taken possession of my own! suffer me to be vain and to use this enchanting word: if it be mine, it is, as the Soul is the Body's; to animate, to inform, to actuate and command its every motion, and to reign supreme over all its little, unworthy Proprietor. I have a letter from J. West, in answer to my Notification, full of a sincere and cordial Joy at my Happiness; our happiness, let me say; for so these Good People term it. t'is happiness indeed; how, my adored, shall I ever deserve you? Adieu!

The Love-Letters

Mr. Pitt is delighted with the charming letter his adored Lady Hester had sent to his "poor sister." It even brought tears to his eyes. Yet Lord Rosebery refers to it as "icy."

Pitt was an altogether too lenient judge of his lady's literary gifts. This letter of his is almost fulsome in its praise and gratitude, were it not for its obvious sincerity.

"How, my adored, shall I ever deserve you?" Really, it might almost be Queen Victoria, writing to her "Beloved, Adored, Most Excellent Albert!"

He writes again, still from Bath, on Wednesday, October 30th:

(October) *Bath, Wednesday, 30th. 1754.*

THIS day's Post has been most kind to me in all respects but one; it brought me your sweet letter of Sunday, so like to all your others, and so unlike to all those that have ever come from the pen of the tenderest and most noble Heart: it brought me, too, many Pleasures and Satisfactions, that grow out of your matchless goodness, and my inexpressible adoration of you: (and from what else can Pleasure or satisfaction to me possibly spring?) I mean seven or eight letters of most warm participations with me in my felicity; and above all, a letter from my Dearest Lord Temple, the very twin Brother to your own sweet letters; for it is, in the warmest and most generous friendship what my adored Lady Hester's letters are, in sentiments tenderly and delightfully transcending all but the effusions of Her own noble Heart, alone given up to the god-like Pleasure of blessing the suppliant she permits to adore Her. Hagley has paid to my loved Lady Hester's excellencies the tribute at least of half a dozen pens. how much sincerity has flowed from all! I transmit Sir George's letter,

The Love-Letters

which is kind, and has an air of speaking his sentiments. I imparted my happiness to Him through Wm. L. not without some expressions of much reserve towards Him. the more the merit of his obliging letter. the reason I send it to you is, that it points to a contingency that may prove agreeable to our dear Harry. Wm. L. wishes to go to America. Lord Halifax has answered Ld. G. and me favourably upon it. Bewdley, in that case opens: the rest you can see by George's letter. the intimation from me pointed to was through Wm. L. I added that it might come to Ld. T. as from Sir G's own original motion. so, my Dearest Lady Hester, if you please, let it be; it will have a thousand healing consequences: poor Ld. G. by this letter, deserves it, I am sure, from me. the intimation therefore, from me may rest always with yourself and Harry, who knows it. give me leave, my Sweet Life, to trouble you, too, to read the letter, such as it is, of an unshining, but a most good and affectionate and honourable woman. the mail from Wickham is admirable. Kitty's letter has all the marks of herself, and and for a principal one, consequently, the most cordial, sincere and warm affection. I love Her for it; my dearest Lady Hester, too, will love her for it, I am sure, and be diverted with it,

of William Pitt

as well as affected with esteem and goodwill to the honest writer of it. I cou'd not dwell upon any letters but your own. unless they bear relation to you. all become interesting that carry that merit in them. I have held my Sweetest Life too long in suspense what the Post brought me of ill. it is the Law's delay. Nuthall has rather misapprehended his orders, or I did not well explain myself to Mr. G. the Reversions are like to cause this cruel Protraction. I had understood they were not to be a part of the settlements upon which my too generous Lady Hester was to throw herself away. I hope the mistake will be Nuthall's, not mine. I have ordered Him to repair to Wotton again. may I flatter myself with the charming hope that my tenderest Life wou'd not wish to delay the felicity and glory she deigns to bestow. I am all submission to her Will, unrepining, however feeling. but may I most respectfully implore that small niceties of the Law may be waved? Difficulties arising from M. G. are and ought to be sacred. these, I trust, will, upon explanation, not be found to be of that description. I write in extreme haste to save the Post. Wm. Lyttelton, who arrived this Evening, has taken a good part of it. Saturday, I trust in Heaven, will give the loved Source of all my felicity to

The Love-Letters

my longing Eyes, in perfect health, and happy in the matchless happiness she bestows. Adieu, till that dear Moment. I start to-morrow, after the Post arrives.

In this letter, he encloses one from his sister Ann. One can see what great hopes he had of a friendship between these two.

He acquiesces in her date for the Wedding, but Saturday "I trust in Heaven," he says, "will give the loved source of all my felicity to my longing eyes, in perfect health, and happy in the matchless happiness she bestows. . . . I start to-morrow . . . after the Post arrives," so as not to miss the least chance of a letter from the Beloved!

The next is his last letter:

The Love-Letters

X X I V

(Oct. 1754.) *Marlborough, Thursday night.*

THANK Heaven, I am so far in my way towards that Indian Room to which my adored Lady Hester has kindly directed an imagination that paints but one loved Image to me in colours to fix my mind: every other Idea in the World is thrown infinitely behind, to a background hardly perceptible. were all that both the Indian worlds contain the price of that moment I shall set foot in that sweet Room, how poor, how nothing were all their Treasures? I have lived through your two days' letter with the sweetest transports of love and gratitude. I figure I actually see my loveliest Life at her Inn at Missenden, delivered up, as She too kindly expresses it, to an Idea she qualifies so tenderly, wou'd for ever it were a reality! I am with Her at this Moment, I am at her loved feet in that room where she can have the goodness to remember She has seen the most passionately devoted of men; and where she can tenderly confess, her dear Eyes will not see Him with pain, saturday next. how delightfull to me is every step I make in my journey, when I can tell my happy Heart I move with the

wishes and Prayers of the best and most amiably perfect of women? let me come to what indeed I ought to have begun with; a wish, a supplication, I fear too ardently pursued, and yet refused so amiably and sweetly that it were a sort of sin against such a Love as you have given me to have been more touched and delighted with your consent than with the manner and the dear accompanyments of your refusal. you seem to make me feel, and to wish to do it, without giving me pain, that my Impatience gos faster than your Delicacy and Dignity can allow. I am sure it gos faster, infinitely faster than my own Heart can avow, if it but seems to go faster than the supreme, deep-rooted Respect which is fixed in my soul for your Dignity and your Virtue wou'd justify. if it be so, I implore, with real self-condemnation and penetence, pardon for an offence, which, to myself the most favourable cause of offence, were Love itself, wou'd never pass for an excuse. how many millions of the tenderest and most ardent Thanks dos my soul pay your goodness for having thought the 14th. or 15th. too early a Day? I were every way of a composition more unworthy of my bliss, than I am indeed, if I cou'd think of anything but what your tender goodness gives; not of what my

The Love-Letters

ardour may have too pressingly implored, and which your propriety and Delicacy has most gently and sweetly declined. Your dear Brother Harry may perhaps write to you to-night to endeavour to remove any cause of Delay that take their rise from him. t'is infinitely kind to me: but I sincerely and strenuously dissuaded this very obliging office. All I troubled my sweet Life with last night about Mr. Nuthall is out of date and I wish I had not taken up the place upon a paper I hate to fill with anything not directly You. when Mr. G. comes from Wotton, I know all will be found just as I wish it, for it will be as he thinks best. acquiescence to the determination of my lovely Lady Hester is not what I feel upon your letter of Tuesday: acquiescence were indeed a poor effort of the Love and Devotion, I, indeed, feel for you. my every wish, my whole will, is changed into yours, from the moment I know there is a difference between them, not arising from want of goodness towards me; which every hour furnishes me with the happy, endearing proofs of. Millions and millions of Loves to my adored Lady Hester, for the tender sentiments poor Lord Drumlanrigg's disastrous fate call'd up in her mind. I truly felt to my Soul, what you express so finely and so tenderly; it is indeed

an event to make the happy tremble. I have writ to the poor Duke to enquire after the health of the Family which I dread to hear. I will now dismiss this melancholy subject with the beautifull and touching words of your Dear Brother, Ld. Temple, " Why must I blot this happy paper with the miserable name of Queensberry? " I meant this for the Post, but none gos till Sunday. it will come by a Servant, why not by myself? variety of business, the more fatiguing as they interpose between my Thoughts and the only idea they can consider with pleasure, have for a day or two, a little hurried not disordered me, so that I have broke my journey by lying here, and shall not reach London till Saturday morning. I hope to be there about eleven; and soon after, my lovelyest, sweetest Lady Hester, only not in Heaven. till that blessed moment, Adieu my adored. Adieu, Thou every perfection of human nature. Ld. Temple's Thought of Ealing is better than Wickham. Wickham I loved enough already. I am happy that my Sister has appeared to you in a light you seem pleased with. I must think of her only as you will do. I have no other test. happy, too happy that there is one exception to this rule which your tender Partiality has made necessary to me.

The Love-Letters

His last love-letter is dated from Marlborough, on Thursday night, October 31st. He is at last on his way to London, and happy beyond words at the thought of their meeting so soon to be.

He has lived with her letters; he could almost see his "loveliest life" at her Inn at Missenden; he is with her all the time in spirit; every step of his journey is a delight—the more so, as he is assured that her dear Eyes will not see him with pain, Saturday next.

Then, with his usual diffidence, he refers to her rejection of the date for the Wedding, in favour of a later day (15th or 16th November). He acquiesces at once, with grace and courtesy. "I were every way of a composition more unworthy of my bliss than I am indeed, if I cou'd think of anything but what your tender goodness gives, not of what my ardour may have too pressingly implored. I, indeed, feel for you, my every wish, my whole will, is changed into yours." He hopes to be in London about eleven, and soon after, "my loveliest, sweetest Lady Hester, only not in Heaven." . . .

of William Pitt

So they met again, on that Saturday morning, November 2nd, in that Indian Room of which she had written to him, and in which he had so fondly pictured her.

After this, there were no more long journeys for her alone; they were in the same City. They met every day.

But even that was not enough for Mr. Pitt, that ardent lover! Day by day he sends her little scribbled notes. He wrote, as I think the most prejudiced critic would allow, by far the better love-letters of the two, and these little notes are full of his over-flowing love for her. They were short, for they were written at brief moments, snatched from a life full to overflowing just then, with Newcastle's plans, with his Chelsea Pensions Bill, with half a hundred tiresome details of his official life.

And it is impossible to say for certain in what order they were written. But it seems fairly probable that Lady Hester caught her cold on the journey to London, so I have placed first the few notes which refer to this cold.

He went to Dinner with her on most days; on one or two, alas! he was not well enough to dine. On one of these evenings, he asked her to go to see his sister.

The minute details of his state of health show

The Love-Letters

how intimate and loving was her care of him even before their marriage.

I don't know which was the last of the little notes, but have placed last the one which seems to me most appropriate:

I AM extremely impatient to hear how my Dearest Lady Hester's cold is to-day, may I be told it is well! I had a pretty good night and am somewhat easier. I propose to ride, must do some business and give many agreeable little directions. These excepted, how tedious is everything that holds me from you! I hope to see you at two o'clock.



Shall I have the joy of hearing that my sweet Love is better, that she is quite well of all but an excuse against Hodgkinson. I am not worse: I must do a great deal this morning. see Legge, go to Newcastle House and make reparation to poor Sir George: riding shall not be forgot, if it dos not rain. this will find you in your Roxana's Tent. had you been there, the Master of it would have never left it.



I am just returned from Newcastle House, and going to ride: I am pretty well. can my dearest Lady Hester have become a little im-

The Love-Letters

patient to hear of me? I hope she has, for I know one at least as impatient to hear of Her and to see Her, to-day.



I was fatigued till I knew my Dearest Lady Hester is better. how many joys in that news? and how sweet a cause assign'd of the success of my every wish? if joy can alleviate Sickness, what a nothing is fatigue before it? I am sitting down to Dinner, that is, setting out in a few minutes to thank my Dearest Life for the obliging and much wished-for note.



I trust that my Dearest Lady Hester is above being enquired after. I had talk'd too much of business and infinitely too little to my Love. a ride has repair'd me pretty well and I am dressing for the day: which I will hate every hour of till 3. Adieu!



May this note find my loved Lady Hester without the smallest remains of pain in her shoulder! did not we tire her last night, her Brothers and her yet more troublesome inmate? I hope, as much as I talked to them, to find voice enough to tell my adored Life by and by,

of William Pitt

that every Day and every Hour adds to my tenderest and most happy sentiments: I am as well as Rhubarb will let me be, and hope to be better to-morrow for it.



I am going to ride and hope to return better, if the man so happy to talk to you of his health as a subject interesting to you, can be truly said not to be quite well. I am not quite well is the truth, which you ordered me to write: but I extremely hope and trust that my disorder is transient and that, perhaps, in consequence, I may be the better for it. I long for two o'clock with an impatience too happy to belong to Illness. a Dinner with my loveliest Lady Hester and her sweet Society the rest of the Day, will give me health by giving every other comfort and felicity.



I am still not quite well. the worst of my little disorder is that I cannot banquet (for such your delicious chicken is) in Argyle Street. Doctor Wilmot thinks the attack bilious; apprehends little from it. has ordered me an emetick. will my kindest Lady Hester visit my Sister this Evening, and early? t'will be Charity as well as Love.

The Love-Letters

The sight of my loved Lady Hester gave me a much better night than I might have expected. I am going to ride, and hope to tell the sweet and only Comfort of my Life that I am better for it, when I see her. I propose to have that Delight about 3 o'clock.



How shall I pass so long a morning without seeing the adored, tender object my eyes saw (vanish) from them into her loved Indian room last night: it was, at that moment hardly loved by me. I long for a sweet reconciliation with it, with an impatience you alone can create and I feel. I am better this morning. What shall I be when I see my dearly loved Lady Hester? hear the sweet language that her tender Heart graces her lips with: and snatch the still sweeter and inexpressible bliss that inhabits there? I hope to have measured that immense space from Whitehall to Argyle Buildings by two o'clock.



How fortunate that I have a privilege of writing a second note to you. my first will have told you that your happy servant is better. how much I can't tell till I have the joy to tell it to

of William Pitt

your face. a vulgar expression you make peculiarly apt and perfectly elegant. millions of grateful and respectfully tender thanks to the woman of ——(?) Till two adieu and let me think I am not so far from your thoughts as the Pay Office is from Argyle Street.



I ought to write earlier this morning, considering how early my dearest Lady Hester kindly banished me last night. her exile is tolerably well. is her lov'd Self quite well? cruel calls upon my whole morning leave me only the sweet hope (why is it so far off?) of seeing her at 3 o'clock. till then adieu.



If my ador'd Lady Hester is well, I am too happy. my impatience to bless my Eyes with that news, traced by your own lov'd hand, I am unable to paint. may your own tender Heart help to tell you.



I fear this note, late as it is for my anxious Impatience, may be too early in my loved Lady Hester's apartment. What joy will it be to hear she has slept well, and that she has waked free

The Love-Letters

from every complaint: if so, may I tell myself that she does not disapprove my complaint that Friday is so long in moving out of the way of the sweet day that follows it?

And, on Saturday, November 16th, William Pitt and his adored Lady Hester Grenville were married, at her Lodgings in Argyle Street. The wedding seems to have been quite without ceremony, even as Pitt had desired; and they went down to Wickham for the Honeymoon, of only a short ten days.

The love thus consummated lasted their whole life long. "I am not so much my own as I am yours," she had written to him, and loyally, loyally she made proof of her words. She worshipped him always. He was the lode-star of her devoted life. Gladly she followed where he led, bore his children, safeguarded his health, piloting him through dark and terrible days of trouble, of illness and distraction. Gladly they walked the perilous highway together, where State Service, Fame and Honour awaited him, marred only by the tragedy of his ill-health. "When he was master of his fate, she let him lead, for she knew him to be a leader." But when the darkness came over his soul (and there were four terrible years in which his illness so affected his reason that he had to retire from public life altogether, and indeed hardly spoke or moved)

The Love-Letters of William Pitt

“ she instantly rose to the needs of her husband, and herself, their children and their country. She showed herself to be what Coutts the Banker declared of her, ‘ The cleverest man of her time, in politics and business’; and when she had to touch upon affairs of State showed discretion worthy of Chatham himself.”

*Always they had one mind, one single heart.
Their last letters are as loving as their first.*



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